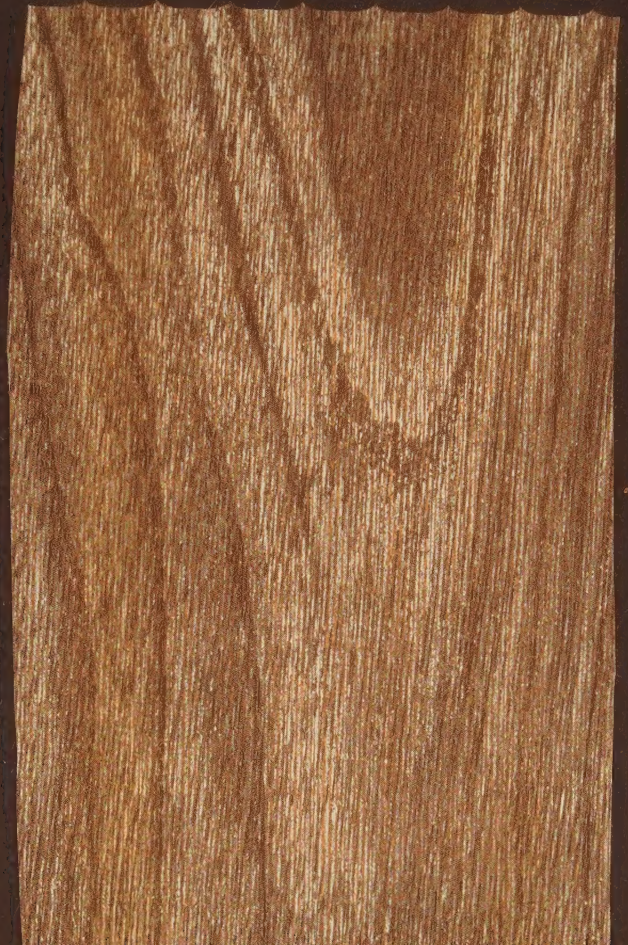

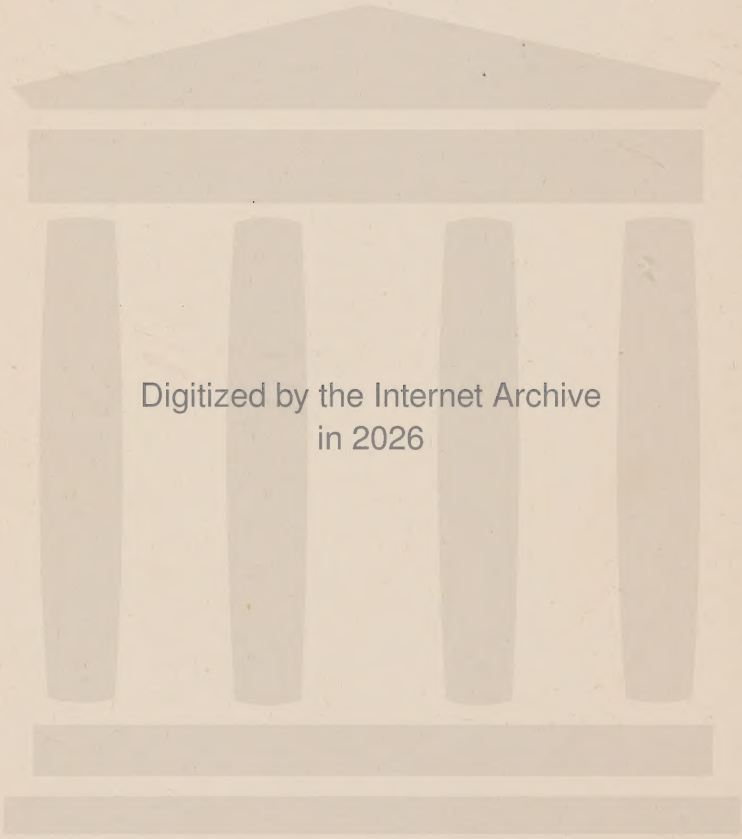

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THE

TREASURY OF DAVID:

CONTAINING

AN ORIGINAL EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS;

A COLLECTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS FROM THE WHOLE RANGE OF LITERATURE;

A SERIES OF HOMILETICAL HINTS UPON ALMOST EVERY VERSE;

AND LISTS OF WRITERS UPON EACH PSALM.

BY

C. H. SPURGEON.

VOL. II.

PSALM XXVII. TO LII.

NEW YORK:
FUNK & WAGNALLS, 10 AND 12 DEY STREET.

1882.

AUTHORIZATION.

"*Messrs. Funk & Wagnall have entered into an arrangement with me to reprint* THE TREASURY OF DAVID *in the United States. I have every confidence in them that they will issue it correctly and worthily. It has been the great literary work of my life, and I trust it will be as kindly received in America as in England. I wish for Messrs. Funk success in a venture which must involve a great risk, and much outlay.*"

Dec. 8, 1881. C. H. SPURGEON.

PREFACE.

GREATLY encouraged by the generous reception awarded to my first volume, I have laboured on with diligence, and am now able to present the reader with the second instalment of my work. Whether life and health shall be given me to complete my task, which will probably extend to six volumes, remains with the gracious Preserver of men; but with his aid and allowance, my face is set towards that design, and I pray that my purpose may be achieved, if it be for the divine glory, and for the good of his church.

In this volume, which like the former, contains twenty-six sacred odes, we have several of the more memorable and precious of Zion's songs. In commenting upon some of them, I have been overwhelmed with awe, and said with Jacob, "How dreadful is this place, it is none other than the house of God." Especially was this the case with the fifty-first; I postponed expounding it week after week, feeling more and more my inability for the work. Often I sat down to it, and rose up again without having penned a line. It is a bush burning with fire yet not consumed, and out of it a voice seemed to cry to me, "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet." The Psalm is very human, its cries and sobs are of one born of woman; but it is freighted with an inspiration all divine, as if the Great Father were putting words into his child's mouth. Such a Psalm may be wept over, absorbed into the soul, and exhaled again in devotion; but commented on—ah! where is he who having attempted it can do other than blush at his defeat?

I have followed the same plan as in the former volume, not only because I am committed to it by the law of uniformity, but also because it is on the whole advantageous. Some have suggested alterations, but many more have commended the very features which would have been improved away, and therefore I have continued in the selfsame method.

Greater use has, in this volume, been made of the Latin writers. Extracts have been made not only from those which are condensed in Pool's Synopsis; but from many others. These works are a mine of exposition far too little known. If the index shall serve to introduce fresh expositions to my ministerial readers, I shall not have laboured in vain.

The acknowledgments of obligation made in Volume I. might very justly be repeated as concerning Volume II.; the reader will consider them as again recorded. It may also be needful to repeat the statement that as I give the name of each Author quoted, each authority is personally responsible for his own sentiments; and I do not wish it to be supposed that I endorse all that is inserted. It is often useful to us to know what has been said by authors whose views we could by no means accept.

More and more is the conviction forced upon my heart that every man must traverse the territory of the Psalms himself if he would know what a goodly land they are. They flow with milk and honey, but not to strangers; they are only fertile to lovers of their hills and vales. None but the Holy Spirit can give a man the key to the Treasury of David; and even he gives it rather to experience than to study. Happy he who for himself knows the secret of the Psalms.

If permitted by the Great Master whom I serve, I shall now proceed with another portion of this TREASURY OF DAVID; but the labour and research are exceedingly great, and my other occupations are very pressing, and therefore I must crave the patience of the Christian public.

Clapham, November, 1870.

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PSALM XXVII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—*Nothing whatever can be drawn from the title as to the time when this Psalm was written, for the heading,* "A Psalm of David," *is common to so many of the Psalms; but if one may judge from the matter of the song, the writer was pursued by enemies, verses* 2 *and* 3, *was shut out from the house of the Lord, verse* 4, *was just parting from father and mother, verse* 10, *and was subject to slander, verse* 12; *do not all these meet in the time when Doeg, the Edomite, spake against him to Saul? It is a song of cheerful hope, well fitted for those in trial who have learned to lean upon the Almighty arm. The Psalm may with profit be read in a threefold way, as the language of David, of the Church, and of the Lord Jesus. The plenitude of Scripture will thus appear the more wonderful.*

DIVISION.—*The poet first sounds forth his sure confidence in his God,* 1—3, *and his love of communion with him,* 4—6. *He then betakes himself to prayer,* 7—12, *and concludes with an acknowledgment of the sustaining power of faith in his own case, and an exhortation to others to follow his example.*

EXPOSITION.

THE LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will* I *be* confident.

1. "*The Lord is my light and my salvation.*"—Here is personal interest, "*my light,*" "*my salvation;*" the soul is assured of it, and therefore, declaring it boldly. "*My light;*"—into the soul at the new birth divine light is poured as the precursor of salvation; where there is not enough light to see our own darkness and to long for the Lord Jesus, there is no evidence of salvation. Salvation finds us in the dark, but it does not leave us there; it gives light to those who sit in the valley of the shadow of death. After conversion our God is our joy, comfort, guide, teacher, and in every sense our light; he is light within, light around, light reflected from us, and light to be revealed to us. Note, it is not said merely that the Lord gives light, but that he "*is*" light; nor that he gives salvation, but that he is salvation; he, then, who by faith has laid hold upon God has all covenant blessings in his possession. Every light is not the sun, but the sun is the father of all lights. This being made sure as a fact, the argument drawn from it is put in the form of a question. "*Whom shall I fear?*" A question which is its own answer. The powers of darkness are not to be feared, for the Lord, our light, destroys them; and the damnation of hell is not to be dreaded by us, for the Lord is our salvation. This is a very different challenge from that of boastful Goliath, for it is based upon a very different foundation; it rests not upon the conceited vigour of an arm of flesh, but upon the real power of the omnipotent I AM. "*The Lord is the strength of my life.*" Here is a third glowing epithet, to show that the writer's hope was fastened with a threefold cord which could not be broken. We may well accumulate terms of praise where the Lord lavishes deeds of grace. Our life derives all its strength from him who is the author of it; and if he deigns to make us strong we cannot be weakened by all the machinations of the adversary. "*Of whom shall I be afraid?*" The bold question looks into the future as well as the present. "If God be for us," who can be against us, either now or in time to come?

2. This verse records a past deliverance, and is an instance of the way in which experience should be employed to reassure our faith in times of trial. Each word is instructive. "*When the wicked.*" It is a hopeful sign for us when the wicked hate us; if our foes were godly men it would be a sore sorrow, but as for the wicked their hatred is better than their love. "*Even mine enemies and my foes.*" There were many of them, they were of different sorts, but they were unanimous in mischief and hearty in hatred. "*Came upon me*"—advanced to the attack, leaping upon the victim like a lion upon its prey. "*To eat up my flesh,*" like cannibals they would make a full end of the man, tear him limb from limb, and make a feast for their malice. The enemies of our souls are not deficient in ferocity, they yield no quarter, and ought to have none in return. See in what danger David was; in the grip and grasp of numerous, powerful, and cruel enemies, and yet observe his perfect safety and their utter discomfiture! "*They stumbled and fell.*" God's breath blew them off their legs. There were stones in the way which they never reckoned upon, and over these they made an ignominious tumble. This was literally true in the case of our Lord in Gethsemane, when those who came to take him went backward and fell to the ground; and herein he was a prophetic representative of all wrestling believers who, rising from their knees shall, by the power of faith, throw their foes upon their faces.

3. "*Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.*" Before the actual conflict, while as yet the battle is untried, the warrior's heart, being held in suspense, is very liable to become fluttered. The encamping host often inspires greater dread than the same host in actual affray. Young tells us of some—

> "Who feel a thousand deaths in fearing one."

Doubtless the shadow of anticipated trouble is, to timorous minds, a more prolific source of sorrow than the trouble itself, but faith puts a strengthening plaister to the back of courage, and throws out of the window the dregs of the cup of trembling. "*Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*" When it actually comes to push of pike, faith's shield will ward off the blow; and if the first brush should be but the beginning of a war, yet faith's banners will wave in spite of the foe. Though battle should succeed battle, and one campaign should be followed by another, the believer will not be dismayed at the length of the conflict. Reader, this third verse is the comfortable and logical inference from the second, confidence is the child of experience. Have you been delivered out of great perils? then set up your ensign, wait at your watch-fire, and let the enemy do his worst.

4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

4. "*One thing.*" Divided aims tend to distraction, weakness, disappointment. The man of one book is eminent, the man of one pursuit is successful. Let all our affections be bound up in one affection, and that affection set upon heavenly things. "*Have I desired*"—what we cannot at once attain, it is well to desire. God judges us very much by the desire of our hearts. He who rides a lame horse is not blamed by his master for want of speed, if he makes all the haste he can, and would make more if he could; God takes the will for the

deed with his children. "*Of the Lord.*" This is the right target for desires, this is the well into which to dip our buckets, this is the door to knock at, the bank to draw upon; desire of men, and lie on the dunghill with Lazarus: desire of the Lord, and be carried of angels into Abraham's bosom. Our desires of the Lord should be sanctified, humble, constant, submissive, fervent, and it is well if, as with the psalmist, they are all molten into one mass. Under David's painful circumstances we might have expected him to desire repose, safety, and a thousand other good things, but no, he has set his heart on the pearl, and leaves the rest. "*That will I seek after.*" Holy desires must lead to resolute action. The old proverb says, "Wishers and woulders are never good housekeepers," and "wishing never fills a sack." Desires are seeds which must be sown in the good soil of activity, or they will yield no harvest. We shall find our desires to be like clouds without rain, unless followed up by practical endeavours. "*That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.*" For the sake of communion with the King. David longed to dwell always in the palace; so far from being wearied with the services of the Tabernacle, the longed to be constantly engaged in them, as his life-long pleasure. He desired above all things to be one of the household of God, a home-born child, living at home with his Father. This is our dearest wish, only we extend it to those days of our immortal life which have not yet dawned. We pine for our Father's house above, the home of our souls; if we may but dwell there for ever, we care but little for the goods or ills of this poor life. "Jerusalem the golden" is the one and only goal of our heart's longings. "*To behold the beauty of the Lord.*" An exercise both for earthly and heavenly worshippers. We must not enter the assemblies of the saints in order to see and be seen, or merely to hear the minister; we must repair to the gatherings of the righteous, intent upon the gracious object of learning more of the loving Father, more of the glorified Jesus, more of the mysterious Spirit, in order that we may the more lovingly admire, and the more reverently adore our glorious God. What a word is that, "*the beauty of the Lord!*" Think of it, dear reader! Better far—behold it by faith! What a sight will that be when every faithful follower of Jesus shall behold "the King in his beauty!" Oh, for that infinitely blessed vision! "*And to enquire in his temple.*" We should make our visits to the Lord's house enquirers' meetings. Not seeking sinners alone, but assured saints should be enquirers. We must enquire as to the will of God and how we may do it; as to our interest in the heavenly city, and how we may be more assured of it. We shall not need to make enquiries in heaven, for there we shall know even as we are known; but meanwhile we should sit at Jesus' feet, and awaken all our faculties to learn of him.

5. This verse gives an excellent reason for the psalmist's desire after communion with God, namely, that he was thus secured in the hour of peril. "*For in the time of trouble,*" that needy time, that time when others forsake me, "*he shall hide me in his pavilion:*" he shall give me the best of shelter in the worst of danger. The royal pavilion was erected in the centre of the army, and around it all the mighty men kept guard at all hours; thus in that divine sovereignty which almighty power is sworn to maintain, the believer peacefully is hidden, hidden not by himself furtively, but by the king, who hospitably entertains him. "*In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.*" Sacrifice aids sovereignty in screening the elect from harm. No one of old dared to enter the most holy place on pain of death; and if the Lord has hidden his people there, what foe shall venture to molest them? "*He shall set me up upon a rock.*" Immutability, eternity, and infinite power here come to the aid of sovereignty and sacrifice. How blessed is the standing of the man whom God himself sets on high above his foes, upon an impregnable rock which never can be stormed! Well may we desire to dwell with the Lord who so effectually protects his people.

6. "*And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me.*"—He is quite sure of it. Godly men of old prayed in faith, nothing wavering, and spoke of the answer to their prayers as a certainty. David was by faith so sure of a glorious victory over all those who beset him, that he arranged in his own

heart what he would do when his foes lay all prostrate before him; that arrangement was such as gratitude suggested. "*Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy.*" That place for which he longed in his conflict, should see his thankful joy in his triumphant return. He does not speak of jubilations to be offered in his palace, and feastings in his banqueting halls, but holy mirth he selects as most fitting for so divine a deliverance. "*I will sing.*" This is the most natural mode of expressing thankfulness. "*Yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.*" The vow is confirmed by repetition, and explained by addition, which addition vows all the praise unto Jehovah. Let who will be silent, the believer when his prayer is heard, must and will make his praise to be heard also; and let who will sing unto the vanities of the world, the believer reserves his music for the Lord alone.

7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 *When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face *far* from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

7. "*Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice.*"—The pendulum of spirituality swings from prayer to praise. The voice which in the last verse was tuned to music is here turned to crying. As a good soldier, David knew how to handle his weapons, and found himself much at home with the weapon of "all prayer." Note his anxiety to be heard. Pharisees care not a fig for the Lord's hearing them, so long as they are heard of men, or charm their own pride with their sounding devotions; but with a genuine man, the Lord's ear is everything. The *voice* may be profitably used even in private prayer; for though it is unnecessary, it is often helpful, and aids in preventing distractions. "*Have mercy also upon me.*" Mercy is the hope of sinners and the refuge of saints. All acceptable petitioners dwell much upon this attribute. "*And answer me.*" We may expect answers to prayer, and should not be easy without them any more than we should be if we had written a letter to a friend upon important business, and had received no reply.

8. In this verse we are taught that if we would have the Lord hear our voice, we must be careful to respond to *his* voice. The true heart should echo the will of God as the rocks among the Alps repeat in sweetest music the notes of the peasant's horn. Observe, that the command was in the plural, to all the saints, "*Seek ye;*" but the man of God turned it into the singular by a personal application, "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" The voice of the Lord is very effectual where all other voices fail. "*When thou saidst,*" then my "*heart,*" my inmost nature was moved to an obedient reply. Note the promptness of the response—no sooner said than done; as soon as God said "*seek,*" the heart said, "*I will seek.*" Oh, for more of this holy readiness! Would to God that we were more plastic to the divine hand, more sensitive of the touch of God's Spirit.

9. "*Hide not thy face far from me.*" The word "*far*" is not in the original, and is a very superfluous addition of the translators, since even the least hiding of the Lord's face is a great affliction to a believer. The command to seek the Lord's face would be a painful one if the Lord, by withdrawing himself, rendered

it impossible for the seeker to meet with him. A smile from the Lord is the greatest of comforts, his frown the worst of ills. "*Put not thy servant away in anger.*" Other servants had been put away when they proved unfaithful, as for instance, his predecessor Saul; and this made David, while conscious of many faults, most anxious that divine long-suffering should continue him in favour. This is a most appropriate prayer for us under a similar sense of unworthiness. "*Thou hast been my help.*" How truly can we join in this declaration; for many years, in circumstances of varied trial, we have been upheld by our God, and must and will confess our obligation. "Ingratitude," it is said, "is natural to fallen man," but to spiritual men it is unnatural and detestable. "*Leave me not, neither forsake me.*" A prayer for the future, and an inference from the past. If the Lord had meant to leave us, why did he begin with us? Past help is but a waste of effort if the soul now be deserted. The first petition, "*leave me not,*" may refer to temporary desertions, and the second word to the final withdrawal of grace, both are to be prayed against; and concerning the second, we have immutable promises to urge. "*O God of my salvation.*" A sweet title worthy of much meditation.

10. "*When my father and my mother forsake me.*" These dear relations will be the last to desert me, but if the milk of human kindness should dry up even from their breasts, there is a Father who never forgets. Some of the greatest of the saints have been cast out by their families, and persecuted for righteousness' sake. "*Then the Lord will take me up.*" Will espouse my cause, will uplift me from my woes, will carry me in his arms, will elevate me above my enemies, will at last receive me to his eternal dwelling place.

11. "*Teach me thy way, O Lord.*" He does not pray to be indulged with his own way, but to be informed as to the path in which the righteous Jehovah would have him walk. This prayer evinces an humble sense of personal ignorance, great teachableness of spirit, and cheerful obedience of heart. "*Lead me in a plain path.*" Help is here sought as well as direction; we not only need a map of the way, but a guide to assist us in the journey. A path is here desired which shall be open, honest, straightforward, in opposition to the way of cunning, which is intricate, tortuous, dangerous. Good men seldom succeed in fine speculations and doubtful courses; plain simplicity is the best spirit for an heir of heaven: let us leave shifty tricks and political expediences to the citizens of the world—the New Jerusalem owns plain men for its citizens. Esau was a cunning hunter, Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. "*Because of mine enemies.*" These will catch us if they can, but the way of manifest, simple honesty is safe from their rage. It is wonderful to observe how honest simplicity baffles and outwits the craftiness of wickedness. Truth is wisdom. "Honesty is the best policy."

12. "*Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies;*" or I should be like a victim cast to the lions, to be rent to pieces, and utterly devoured. God be thanked that our foes cannot have their way with us, or Smithfield would soon be on a blaze again. "*For false witnesses are risen up against me.*" Slander is an old-fashioned weapon out of the armoury of hell, and is still in plentiful use; and no matter how holy a man may be, there will be some who will defame him. "Give a dog an ill name, and hang him;" but glory be to God, the Lord's people are not dogs, and their ill names do not injure them. "*And such as breathe out cruelty.*" It is their vital breath to hate the good; they cannot speak without cursing them; such was Paul before conversion. They who breathe out cruelty may well expect to be sent to breathe their native air in hell; let persecutors beware!

13 *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

13. Faintness of heart is a common infirmity; even he who slew Goliath was subject to its attacks. Faith puts its bottle of cordial to the lip of the soul, and so prevents fainting. Hope is heaven's balm for present sorrow. In this land of

the dying, it is our blessedness to be looking and longing for our fair portion in the land of the living, whence the goodness of God has banished the wickedness of man, and where holy spirits charm with their society those persecuted saints who were vilified and despised among men. We must believe to see, not see to believe; we must wait the appointed time, and stay our soul's hunger with foretastes of the Lord's eternal goodness which shall soon be our feast and our song.

14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

14. "*Wait on the Lord.*" Wait at his door with prayer; wait at his foot with humility; wait at his table with service; wait at his window with expectancy. Suitors often win nothing but the cold shoulder from earthly patrons after long and obsequious waiting; he speeds best whose patron is in the skies. "*Be of good courage.*" A soldier's motto. Be it mine. Courage we shall need, and for the exercise of it we have as much reason as necessity, if we are soldiers of King Jesus. "*And he shall strengthen thine heart.*" He can lay the plaister right upon the weak place. Let the heart be strengthened, and the whole machine of humanity is filled with power; a strong heart makes a strong arm. What strength is this which God himself gives to the heart? Read the "Book of Martyrs," and see its glorious deeds of prowess; go to God rather, and get such power thyself. "*Wait, I say, on the Lord.*" David, in the words "*I say,*" sets his own private seal to the word which, as an inspired man, he had been moved to write. It is *his* testimony as well as the command of God, and indeed he who writes these scanty notes has himself found it so sweet, so reviving, so profitable to draw near to God, that on his own account he also feels bound to write, "*Wait,* I SAY, *on the Lord.*"

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Verse 1.—"*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*" Alice Driver, martyr, at her examination, put all the doctors to silence, so that they had not a word to say, but one looked upon another; then she said, "Have you no more to say? God be honoured, you be not able to resist the Spirit of God, in me, a poor woman. I was an honest poor man's daughter, never brought up at the University as you have been; but I have driven the plough many a time before my father, I thank God; yet, notwithstanding, in the defence of God's truth, and in the cause of my Master, Christ, by his grace I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defence of the same; and if I had a thousand lives they should go for payment thereof." So the Chancellor condemned her, and she returned to the prison joyful.—*Charles Bradbury.*

Verse 1.—"*The Lord is my light,*" etc. St. John tells us, that "in Christ was life; and the life was the light of men;" but he adds that "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." John i. 4, 5. There is a great difference between the *light*, and the eye that sees it. A blind man may know a great deal about the shining of the sun, but it does not shine for him—it gives him no light. So, to know that "God is light," is one thing (1 John i. 5), and to be able to say, "The Lord is *my* light," is quite another thing. The Lord must be the light by which the way of life is made plain to us—the light by which we may see to walk in that way—the light that exposes the darkness of sin—the light by which we can discover the hidden sins of our own hearts. When he is thus *our light*, then he is *our salvation* also. He is pledged to guide us right; not only to show us sin, but to save us from it. Not

only to make us see God's hatred of sin, and his curse upon it, but also to draw us unto God's love, and to take away the curse. With the Lord lighting us along the road of salvation, who, or what need we fear? Our life is hid with Christ in God. Col. iii. 3. We are weak, very weak, but his "strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor. xii. 2. With the Lord himself pledged to be the strength of our life, of whom need we be afraid?—*From Sacramental Meditations on the Twenty-seventh Psalm*, 1843.

Verse 1.—"*The Lord is my light.*" "*Light*" which makes all things visible, was the first made of all visible things; and whether God did it for our example, or no, I know not; but ever since, in imitation of this manner of God's proceeding, the first thing we do when we intend to do anything, is to get us "*light.*"—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 1.—"*The Lord is my light.*" Adorable Sun, cried St. Bernard, I cannot walk without thee: enlighten my steps, and furnish this barren and ignorant mind with thoughts worthy of thee. Adorable fulness of light and heat, be thou the true noonday of my soul; exterminate its darkness, disperse its clouds; burn, dry up, and consume all its filth and impurities. Divine Sun, rise upon my mind, and never set.—*Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon*, 1652—1729.

Verse 1.—"*Whom shall I fear?*" Neither spiritual nor military heroes do exploits through cowardice. Courage is a necessary virtue. In Jehovah is the best possible foundation for unflinching intrepidity.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1.—"*Of whom shall I be afraid?*" I have no notion of a timid, disingenuous profession of Christ. Such preachers and professors are like a rat playing at hide-and-seek behind a wainscot, who puts his head through a hole to see if the coast is clear, and ventures out if nobody is in the way; but slinks back again if danger appears. We cannot be honest to Christ except we are bold for him. He is either worth *all* we can lose for him, or he is worth *nothing.*—*H. G. Salter, A.M., in* "*The Book of Illustrations*," 1840.

Verse 2.—"*When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*" There is no such dainty dish to a malicious stomach, as the flesh of an enemy; it goes down without chewing, and they swallow it up whole like cormorants. But though malice have a ravenous stomach, yet she hath but slow digestion; though her teeth be sharp, yet her feet are lame, at least apt to stumble; and this made well for David, for when his enemies came upon him to eat up his flesh, because they came upon the feet of malice, "*they stumbled and fell.*" A man may *stumble* and yet not *fall;* but to stumble and fall withal, is the proper stumbling of "*the wicked*," and especially of the maliciously wicked; and such, it seems, was the stumbling of David's enemies, because the enemies were such; and such I doubt not shall be the stumbling of mine enemies, because mine are such; and of what then, of whom now, should I be afraid?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2.—"*When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*" He describes his enemies by their malice, and by their ruin. 1. His enemies were *cruel enemies*, blood-suckers, eaters of flesh. We call them cannibals. As indeed men that have not grace, if they have greatness, and be opposed, their greatness is inaccessible, one man is a devil to another. The Scripture calls them "wolves, that leave nothing till morning." Zeph. iii. 3. As the great fishes eat up the little ones, so great men they make no more conscience of eating up other men, than of eating bread; they make no more bones of overthrowing men and undoing them, than of eating bread. "They eat up my people as they eat bread." Psalm xiv. 4, 2. But notwithstanding their cruelty, *they were overthrown.* Saith David, "*When my foes came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*" For, indeed, God's children, when they are delivered, it is usually with the confusion of their enemies. God doth two things at once, because the special grievance of God's children it is from inward and outward enemies. He seldom or never delivers them but with the confusion of their enemies. This will be most apparent at the day of

judgment, when Satan, and all that are led by his spirit, all the malignant church, shall be sent to their own place, and the church shall be for ever free from all kind of enemies. When the church is most free, then the enemies of the church are nearest to destruction; like a pair of balances, when they are up at the one end, they are down at the other. So when it is up with the church, down go the enemies.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 2.—"*The wicked, mine enemies.*" The wicked hate the godly; there is enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent. Gen. iii. 15. As in nature there is an antipathy between the vine and the bay-tree, the elephant and the dragon. Vultures have an antipathy against sweet smells: so in the wicked there is an antipathy against the people of God; they hate the sweet perfumes of their graces. It is true the saints have their infirmities; but the wicked do not hate them for these, but for their holiness; and from this hatred ariseth open violence: the thief hates the light, therefore would blow it out.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 2.—There was great wisdom in the prayer of John Wesley: "Lord, if I must contend, let it not be with thy people." When we have for foes and enemies those who hate good men, we have at least this consolation, that God is not on their side, and therefore it is essentially weak.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3.—"*Though an host should encamp against me,*" etc. He puts the case of the greatest danger that can be. Though an host should encompass me, "*my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this I will be confident.*" Here is great *courage* for the time to come. "*Experience breeds hope and confidence.*" David was not so courageous a man of himself; but upon experience of God's former comfort and assistance, his faith brake as fire out of the smoke, or as the sun out of a cloud. Though I was in such-and-such perplexities, yet for the time to come, I have such confidence and experience of God's goodness, that I will not fear. He that seeth God by a spirit of faith in his greatness and power, he sees all other things below as nothing. Therefore, he saith here, he cares not for the time to come for any opposition; no, not of an army. "If God be with us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. He saw God in his power; and then, looking from God to the creature, alas! who was he? As Micah, when he had seen God sitting upon his throne; what was Ahab to him, when he had seen God once? So when the prophet David had seen God once, then "*though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear,*" etc.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 3.—"*Though an host should encamp against me,*" etc. If I love my God, and I love him with a noble-spirited love, all my enemies will fight against me in vain; I shall never fear them, and the whole world cannot harm me. Charity cannot be offended, because she takes offence at nothing. Enemies, enviers, slanderers, persecutors, I defy you; if I love, I shall triumph over your attacks. Ye can take away my goods; but if my love has a generous spirit, I shall be always rich enough, and ye cannot take away my love, which alone makes all my riches and treasures. Ye may blacken my reputation; but as I hold you cheaply quit of all homage of praise and applause, I, with all my heart, give you a free leave to blame and to defame. Happily for me, ye cannot blacken me before my God, and his esteem alone makes amends to me, and rewards me, for all your contempt. Ye can persecute my body, but there I even will help you on by my penances; the sooner it shall perish, the sooner shall I be delivered from this domestic enemy, which is a burden to me. What harm, then, can ye do me? If I am resolved to suffer all, and if I think I deserve all the outrages ye can do me, ye will only give more loftiness of spirit to my love, more brilliancy to my crown.—*Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon.*

Verse 3.—Those who are willing to be combatants *for* God, shall also be more than conquerors *through* God. None are so truly courageous as those who are truly religious. If a Christian live, he knows by whose might he stands; and if he die, he knows for whose sake he falls. Where there is no confidence *in*

God, there will be no continuance *with* God. When the wind of faith ceases to fill the sails, the ship of obedience ceases to plough the seas. The taunts of Ishmael shall never make an Isaac disesteem his inheritance.—*William Secker.*

Verses 3, 4.—The favourite grows great by the many favours, gifts, jewels, offices, the prince bestows on him. The Christian grows rich in *experiences*, which he wears as bracelets, and keeps as his richest jewels. He calls one *Ebenezer*—"hitherto God hath helped;" another *Naphtali*—"I have wrestled with God and prevailed;" another *Gershom*—"I was a stranger;" another *Joseph*—"God will yet add more;" and another, *Peniel*—"I have seen the face of God." I. Sam. vii. 12; Gen. xxx. 8; Ex. ii. 22; Gen. xxx. 24, and xxxii. 30. I have been delivered from the *lion*, therefore shall be from the *bear;* from lion and bear, therefore from the *Philistine;* from the Philistine, therefore from *Saul;* from Saul, therefore God will deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me blameless to his heavenly kingdom.—*John Sheffield.*

Verse 4.—"*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*" Some interpreters vary concerning what the psalmist aims at; I understand thus much in a generality, which is clear that he means a communion and fellowship with God, which is that *one thing*, which if a Christian had, he needs desire no more: that we should all desire and desire again and be in love with, and that is enough even to satisfy us, the fruition of God, and the beholding of him in his ordinances, in his temple, to have correspondency and fellowship and communion with him there. O God, vouchsafe us that! Now this is so infinitely sweet, that it was the psalmist's only desire, and the sum of all his desires here, and therefore much more in the tabernacle of heaven, which doth make up the consummation and completeness of all our happiness.—*John Stoughton.*

Verse 4.—"*One thing have I desired of the Lord,*" etc. Seeing David would make but *one* request to God, why would he not make a greater? for, alas! what a poor request is this—to desire *to dwell in God's house?* and what to do? but only to *see?* and to see what? but only a *beauty*, a fading thing, at most but *to enquire;* and what is enquiring? but only to hear news; a vain fancy. And what cause in any of these why David should make it his request to God? But mark, O my soul, what goes with it! Take altogether—"*to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple.*" And now tell me, if there be, if there can be, any greater request to be made? any greater cause to be earnest about it? For though worldly beauty be a fading thing, yet "*the beauty of the Lord,*" shall continue when the world shall fade away; and though enquiring after news be a vain fancy, yet *to enquire in God's Temple* is the way to learn there is no new thing under the sun, and there it was that Solomon learned that "all is vanity." Indeed, this "*one thing,*" that David desires, is in effect that *unum necessarium* that Christ speaks of in the gospel; which Mary makes choice of there, as David doth here.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4. "*One thing,*" etc. A heavenly mind gathers itself up into one wish and no more. "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require.*" Grant me thyself, O Lord, and I will ask no more. The new creature asks nothing of God, but to enjoy God: give me this, O Lord, and for the rest, let Ziba take all. I will part with all to buy that one pearl, the riches of heavenly grace.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Verse 4.—"*One thing.*" The first thing, then, is David's choice, summarily described in the word, "*one thing.*" So Christ confirmeth the prophet's word, while he called Mary's choice, "*one thing.*" Luke x. 42. And that for these three reasons: First, because it is not a common but a *chief* good. If there be any good above it, it is not the chief good; and if there be any good equal unto it, it is not alone. Next, because it is the *last end* which we mind eternally to enjoy; if there be any end beyond it, it is not the last, but amids, and a degree to it. All mids and ends are used for it, but it is sought

for itself, and, therefore, must be but one. Thirdly, it is a *centre* whereunto all reasonable spirits draw. As all lines from a circle meet in the centre, so every one that seeketh happiness aright meeteth in the chief good, as the only thing which they intend, and, therefore, must be *one.*—*William Struther, in* "*True Happiness, or King David's Choice,*" 1633.

Verse 4.—"*One thing.*" Changes, great changes, and many bereavements there have been in my life. I have been emptied from vessel to vessel. But one thing has never failed—one thing makes me feel that my life has been *one;* it has calmed my joys, it has soothed my sorrows, it has guided me in difficulty, it has strengthened me in weakness. It is the *presence* of God—a faithful and loving God. Yes, brethren, the presence of God is not only *light*, it is *unity*. It gives *unity* to the heart that believes it—*unity* to the life that is conformed to it. It was the presence of God in David's soul that enabled him to say, "*One* thing have I desired of the Lord;" and in St. Paul's that enabled him to say, "This one thing I do."—*George Wagner, in the* "*Wanderings of the Children of Israel,*" 1862.

Verse 4.—"*One thing.*"—

> One master passion in the breast,
> Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.
>
> *Alexander Pope.*

Verse 4.—"*That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.*" To approach continually unto the temple, and thither continually to repair was the *dwelling*, no doubt, here meant; to *dwell*, to reside continually there, not to come for a spurt or a fit. . . . And thus dwelt Hannah, the daughter of Phanuel, who is said, in the second of Luke, for the space of four score and four years not to have gone out of the temple. Not that she was there always, but often, saith Lyra; and venerable Bede to the same purpose. Not that she was never absent, no, not an hour; but for that she was often in the temple. And the same St. Luke, speaking of our Saviour's disciples, after they had seen him ascended into heaven—"They returned," saith he, "to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God," chapter xxiv. 52, 53. Thus, St. Austin's mother, in her time too, might be said to *dwell* in God's house, whereunto she came so duly and truly twice a day, "That she, in thy Scriptures," saith St. Austin, "might hear, O God, what thou saidst to her, and thou, in her prayers, what she said to thee." In a word, such were the Christians the same St. Austin speaks of in another place, whom he calleth *the emmets* of God. "Behold the emmet of God," saith he, "it riseth early every day, it runneth to God's church, it there prayeth, it heareth the lesson read, it singeth a psalm, it ruminateth what it heareth, it meditateth thereupon, and hoardeth up within itself the precious corn gathered from that barn-floor."—*John Day's* "*David's Desire to go to Church,*" 1609.

Verse 4.—"*That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.*" In the beginning of the Psalm, David keeps an audit of his soul's accounts, reckoning up the large incomes and lasting treasures of God's bounty, grace, and mercy; the sum whereof is this: The Lord is my light and my life, my strength and my salvation. And now, where shall David design his presence, but where is his light? Where shall he desire his person, but where is his strength? Where shall he wish his soul, but where is his life? and where shall he fix his habitation, but where is his salvation? even in communion with his God; and this, especially, in the holy worship of his sanctuary. No wonder, then, if above all things he desires and seeks after this "*one thing,*" "*to dwell* in the house of the Lord," etc.—*Robert Mossom.*

Verse 4.—"*The house of the Lord.*" It [the tabernacle, the sanctuary], is called the house of God because he is present there, as a man delights to be present in his house. It is the place where God will be met withal. As a man will be found in his house, and there he will have suitors come to him, where he reveals his secrets. A man rests, he lies, and lodgeth in his house. Where is a man so familiar as in his house? and what other place hath he such care

to protect and provide for as his house? and he lays up his treasures and his jewels in his house. So God lays up all the treasures of grace and comfort in the visible church. In the church he is to be spoken with as a man in his house. There he gives us sweet meetings; there are mutual, spiritual kisses. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." Cant. i. 2. A man's house is his castle, as we say, that he will protect and provide for. God will be sure to protect and provide for his church. Therefore he calls the church of God, that is, the tabernacle (that was the church at that time), *the house of God.* If we apply it to our times, that that answers the tabernacle now is particular visible churches under particular pastors, where the means of salvation are set up. Particular visible churches now are God's tabernacle. The church of the Jews was a national church. There was but one church, but one place, and one tabernacle; but now God hath erected particular tabernacles. Every particular church and congregation under one pastor, their meeting is the church of God, a several church independent.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 4.—"*To behold the beauty of the Lord.*" That was one end of his desire, to dwell in the house of God; not to feed his eyes with speculations and goodly sights (as indeed there were in the tabernacle goodly things to be seen). No; he had a more spiritual sight than that. He saw the inward spiritual beauty of those spiritual things. The other were but outward things, as the apostle calls them. I desire to dwell in the house of the Lord, "*to behold the beauty of the Lord,*" the inward beauty of the Lord especially.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 4.—"*The beauty of the Lord.*" In connection with these words, we would try to show that the character of God is attractive, and fitted to inspire us with love for him, and to make us, as it were, run after him. The discussion of our subject may be arranged under three heads. I. Some of the elements of the beauty of the Lord. II. Where the beauty of the Lord may be seen. III. Peculiar traits of the beauty of the Lord. I. Some of the elements of the beauty of the Lord. God is a Spirit. Hence his beauty is spiritual, and its elements must be sought for in spiritual perfection. 1. One of the elements of this beauty is holiness. 2. But the elements of the divine beauty on which we intend at this time to dwell, are those which are included under the general description of God's mercy and grace. The attractiveness of these is more easily perceived, and their influence is sooner felt by persons in our fallen condition. It is mainly through the instrumentality of these that sinners are won over from their enmity against God, and that the Holy Ghost sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. 3. Another thing, which we may call an element of beauty in God, is the combination of his various attributes in one harmonious whole. The colours of the rainbow are beautiful, when taken one by one: but there is a beauty in the rainbow, which arises not from any single tint; there is a beauty in it which would not exist if the several hues were assumed in succession—a beauty which is the result of their assemblage and collocation, and consists in their blended radiance. In like manner do the several perfections, which co-exist and unite in the nature of God, produce a glorious beauty. Holiness is beautiful; mercy is beautiful; truth is beautiful. But, over and above, there is a beauty which belongs to such combinations and harmonies as the psalmist describes, when he tells us, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep," etc. II. We are next to inquire where the beauty of the Lord may be seen. It may so far be seen in the *natural world.* The throne of nature, although in some respects clouds and darkness are round about it, is not without its rainbow of beauty, any more than the throne of grace. The beauty of the Lord may be seen in the *moral law.* In the law! Even so. In the unbending law, with its terrible anathema, his beauty and amiableness shine forth. The law is full of love. The duties of the law are duties of love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The curse of the law is

designed and employed for the maintenance of love. Obedience to the law, and the reign of love, are but different aspects of the same state of things. And one of the sublimest lessons of the law is the fact, that God is love. Again, the beauty of the Lord may be seen in the *gospel*. We see it, as it were, by reflection, in the law; in the gospel, we see it directly. The law shows us the hearts of men, as God would have them to be; the gospel shows us God's own heart. Again, the beauty of the Lord is seen in *Christ*. It is seen in Christ, for he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father. The beauty of the Lord is seen in Christ, when we consider him as the Father's gift, and when we look to his offices and to his character. The character of Christ was the finest spectacle of moral beauty which men or angels ever set their eyes on. III. We conclude by noticing some traits of the beauty of the Lord. 1. It never deceives. 2. It never fades. 3. It never loses its power. 4. It never disappoints.—*Condensed from Andrew Gray* (1805—1861), *in* "*Gospel Contrasts and Parallels.*"

Verse 4.—"*The beauty of the Lord.*" The Lord's *beauty*, to be seen in his house, is not the beauty of his essence, for so no man can see God and live (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 20); before this glorious beauty the angels cover their faces with their wings (Isa. vi. 1, 2); but it is the beauty of his ordinances, wherein God doth reveal to the eyes of men's minds, enlightened by his Spirit, the pleasant beauty of his goodness, justice, love, and mercy in Jesus Christ.—*Thomas Pierson, M.A.*, 1570—1633.

Verse 4.—"*The beauty of the Lord.*"—"*Beauty*" is too particular a word to express the fulness of the Holy Ghost, the pleasantness or the delight of God. Take the word in a general sense, in your apprehensions. It may be the object of all senses, inward and outward. Delight is most transcendent for pleasantness; for indeed God in his ordinances, is not only "beauty" to the eye of the soul, but is ointment to the smell, and sweetness to the taste, and all in all to all the powers of the soul. God in Christ, therefore, he is delightful and sweet. . . . . "*The beauty of the Lord*" is especially the amiable things of God, which is his mercy and love, that makes all other things beautiful that is in the church.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 4.—"*To enquire in his temple.*" The more grace the more business ye will find ye have to do with God in his ordinances; little grace hath little to do, and much grace hath much to do; he hath always business with God, special earnest business. "*To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*" Oh, I have somewhat to enquire after; I am to do something by this duty, and therefore cannot trifle. He that comes to visit his friend in a compliment, he talks, he walks, he trifles, and goes home again; but he that comes upon business, he is full of it: he is like Abraham's honest and faithful servant. Gen. xxiv. 33. "And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told my errand." I have great business with the Lord, about the church, and about my soul, and I will not eat, nor talk, nor think, nor dally about anything, till I have told mine errand, or heard my Maker's errand unto me. And for this end it's a rare thing to carry somewhat always on the spirit, to spread before God, a heart pregnant with some needful request or matter whereof to treat with God. Psalm xlv. 1.—*Richard Steele's* "*Antidote against Distractions,*" 1673.

Verse 4.—It was David's earnest prayer, "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*" There are many that pray David's words, but not with David's heart. *Unum petii*, one thing have I desired, *de præterito*, for the time past; *et hoc requiram*, this I will still seek after, *de futuro*, for the time to come: I have required it long, and this suit I will urge till I have obtained it. What? To dwell in some of the houses of God all the days of my life, and to leave them to my children after me; not to serve him there with devotion, but to make the place mine own possession? These love the house of God too well; they love it to

have and to hold: but because the conveyance is made by the lawyer, and not by the minister, their title will be found naught in the end; and if there be not a *nisi prius* to prevent them, yet at that great day of universal audit, the Judge of all the world shall condemn them. By this way, the nearer to the church, the further from God. The Lord's temple is ordained to gain us to him, not for us to gain it from him. If we love the Lord, we "will love the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelleth;" that so by being humble frequenters of his temple below, we may be made noble saints of his house above, the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 4.—David being in this safe condition, what doth he now think upon or look at, as his main scope? Not as Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, to sit still and be merry, when he had overcome the Romans and all his enemies, as he sometime said to Cyneas, the philosopher, but to improve his rest to perpetual piety, in going from day to day to God's house, as Hannah is said afterwards to have done. Luke ii. And this, first, for the solace of his soul, in seeing the beauty of his sanctuary. Secondly, that he might still be directed aright and be safe. Thirdly, that he might yet be more highly exalted in kingly glory. Fourthly, for all this, as he should have abundant cause, sacrificing and singing psalms to God without ceasing: see verses 5, 6.—*John Mayer.*

Verse 4.—O my soul, what sights have I seen in the house of God! what provisions have I tasted! what entertainments have I had! what enlargements in prayer, and answers thereto! what impression under his word, what entertainment at his table, as he has sometimes brought me into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me has been love! And though I cannot, it may be, say so much of this as some others; yet what I have found, I cannot but remember with thankfulness, and desire more; and as this was *in the house of God, here* would I still desire to dwell.—*Daniel Wilcox*, 1676—1733.

Verse 5.—"*The time of trouble.*" Though God does not always deliver his people out of trouble, yet he delivers them from the evil of trouble, the despair of trouble, by supporting the spirit; nay, he delivers by trouble, for he sanctifies the trouble to cure the souls, and by less troubles delivers from greater.—*From a Broad Sheet in the British Museum, dated, "London: printed for* D. M., 1678."

Verse 5.—"*He shall hide me.*" The word here used means to hide, to secrete, and then, to defend or protect. It would properly be applied to one who had fled from oppression, or from any impending evil, and who should be *secreted* in a house or cavern, and thus rendered safe from pursuers, or from the threatening evil.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 5.—"*Pavilion*" comes from *papilio*, a *butterfly*. It signifies a *tent* made of cloth stretched out on poles, which in form resembles in some measure the insect above named.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5.—"*In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.*" He alludes to the ancient custom of offenders, who used to flee to the tabernacle or altar, where they esteemed themselves safe. 1 Kings ii. 28.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 5.—"*In the secret of his tabernacle.*" Were there no other place, he would put me in the *holy of holies*, so that an enemy would not dare to approach me.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*Now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me.*" A man cannot drown so long as his head is above water. Now, it is the proper office of hope to do this for the Christian in times of any danger. Luke xxi. 28. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh." A strange time, one would think, for Christ then to bid his disciples *lift up their heads* in, when they see other men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth (verse 26); yet now is the time of the rising of their sun, when others' is setting, and the blackness of darkness

is overtaking others; because now the Christian's feast is coming, for which hope hath saved its stomach so long. "Your redemption draweth nigh." Two things make the head hang down—fear and shame; hope easeth the Christian's heart of both these, and so forbids him to give any sign of a desponding mind by a dejected countenance.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 6.—"*Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy.*" "Surely," some may say, "he could have called on God beyond the precincts of the temple. Wherever he wandered as an exile, he carried with him the precious promise of God, so that he needed not to put so great a value upon the sight of the external edifice. He appears, by some gross imagination or other, to suppose that God could be enclosed by wood and stones." But if we examine the words more carefully, it will be easy to see, that his object was altogether different from a mere sight of the noble building and its ornaments, however costly. He speaks, indeed, of the temple, but he places that beauty not so much in the goodliness that was to be seen by the eye, as in its being the celestial pattern which was shown to Moses, as it is written in Exod. xxv. 40: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." As the fashion of the temple was not framed according to the wisdom of man, but was an image of spiritual things, the prophet directed his eyes and all his affections to this object. Their madness is, therefore, truly detestable who wrest this place in favour of pictures and images, which, instead of deserving to be numbered among temple ornaments, are rather like dung and filth, defiling all the purity of holy things.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 8.—"*When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" In the former verse, David begins a prayer to God, "Hear, O Lord; have mercy upon me, and answer me." This verse is a ground of that prayer, "*Seek ye my face,*" saith God. The heart answers again, "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek;*" therefore I am encouraged to pray to thee. In the words are contained God's command and David's obedience. God's warrant and David's work answerable, the voice and the echo: the voice, "*Seek my face;*" the rebound back again of a gracious heart, "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" "*When thou saidst.*" It is not in the original. It only makes way to the sense. Passionate speeches are usually abrupt: "*Seek my face:*" "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." . . . *God is willing to be known.* He is willing to open and discover himself; God delights not to hide himself. God stands not upon state, as some emperors do that think their presence diminisheth respect. God is no such God, but he may be searched into. Man, if any weakness be discovered, we can soon search into the depth of his excellency; but with God it is clean otherwise. The more we know of him, the more we shall admire him. None admire him more than the blessed angels, that see most of him, and the blessed spirits that have communion with him. Therefore he hides not himself, nay, he desires to be known; and all those that have his Spirit desire to make him known. Those that suppress the knowledge of God in his will, what he performs for men, and what he requires of them, they are enemies to God and of God's people. They suppress the opening of God, clean contrary to God's meaning; "*Seek my face;*" I desire to be made known, and lay open myself to you. Therefore we may observe by the way, that when we are in any dark condition, that a Christian finds not the beams of God shining on him, let him not lay the blame upon God, as if God were a God that delighted to hide himself. Oh, no! it is not his delight. He loves not strangeness to his poor creatures. It is not a point of his policy. He is too great to affect* such poor things. No; the fault is altogether in us. We walk not worthy of such a presence; we want humility and preparation. If there be any darkness in the creature, that he finds God doth not so shine on him as in former times, undoubtedly the cause is in himself; for God saith, "*Seek my face.*" He desires to reveal himself.—*Richard Sibbes.*

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* Choose = love.

Verse 8.—"*When thou saidst, Seek ye my face,*" etc. All the Spirit's motions are seasonable, and therefore not to be put off; for delay is a kind of denial, and savours of such ungrateful contempt, as must needs be very displeasing to him. "*When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" God does not only expect such an answer, but expects it immediately upon his call. Whenever he blows with his wind, he looks that we should spread our sails. If we refuse his offered help, we may deservedly want it when desired. As Christ withdrew himself from the spouse because she let him stand knocking so long at the door of her heart, and she still deferred to open, and tired out his loving forbearance with vain and frivolous excuses. Sol. Song, v. 2, etc. But as we must not omit the present performance of any duty which he excites unto, we must not check his influences by being weary of the duties which he assists us in: if we do not improve extraordinary aids by holding out the longer, we provoke him to depart.—*Timothy Cruso.*

Verse 8.—"*When thou saidst, Seek ye my face,*" etc. We see here thus much, that God must *begin* with us, before we can *close with him;* God must seek us, before we can seek him; God must first desire that we draw near to him, before we for our particulars are able to draw near unto God. Thou saidst, Seek my face; and then, and not till then my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8.—"*When thou saidst,*" etc. Now God then speaks to the heart to pray when not only he puts upon the duty by saying to the conscience, This thou oughtest to do; but God's speaking to pray is such as his speech at first was, when he made the world, when he said, "Let there be light, and there was light:" so he says, let there be a prayer, and there is a prayer; that is, he pours upon a man a spirit of grace and supplication, a praying disposition; he puts in motives, suggests arguments and pleas to God; all which you shall find come in readily, and of themselves, and that likewise with a quickening heat and enlargement of affection, and with a lingering, and longing, and restlessness of spirit to be alone, to pour out the soul to God, and to vent and form those motions and suggestions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a speaking to the heart. Observe such times when God doth thus, and neglect them not, then to strike whilst the iron is hot; thou hast then his ear; it is a special opportunity for that business, such a one as thou mayst never have the like. Suitors at court observe *molissima fandi tempora*, their times of begging when they have kings in a good mood, which they will be sure to take the advantage of; but especially if they should find that the king himself should begin of himself to speak of the business which they would have of him: and thus that phrase of Psalm x. 17, that God prepares the heart, is understood by some, that God prepares the heart, and causeth the ear to hear; that is, he fashions it and composeth it into a praying frame. And sure it is a great sign that God means to hear us when himself shall thus indite the petition.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8.—"*When thou saidst,*" etc. And well may this be pleaded, in that God useth not so to stir up and strengthen us to seek him, but when he intendeth to be found of us. Psalm x. 17. "Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." Jer. xxix. 13. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And God maketh it an argument to himself, that if he say to any inwardly as well as outwardly, "*Seek my face,*" he that speaketh righteousness cannot speak thus to them, and frustrate their prayers, and so bid them seek his face in vain. Isaiah xlv. 19, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain; I the Lord speak right things." If Ahasuerus bid his spouse to ask, surely he will not fail to grant her petition (Esther vii. 2); so here. And as when Christ called the blind man to come to him to tell him his grievance, it was truly said to him by them, "Be of good comfort, rise, for he calleth thee." Mark x. 49. So it is in this case.—*Thomas Cobbett.*

Verse 8.—"*My heart said unto thee.*" The heart is between God and our obedience, as it were, an ambassador. It understands from God what God would have done, and then it lays a command upon the whole man. The heart and conscience of man is partly divine, partly human. It hath some divinity in it, especially if the man be a holy man. God speaks, and the heart speaks. God speaks to the heart, and the heart speaks to us. And ofttimes when we hear conscience speaking to us, we neglect it; and as St. Augustine said of himself, "God spake often to me, and I was ignorant of it." When there is no command in the word that the heart directly thinks of (as indeed many profane careless men scarce have a Bible in their houses), God speaks to them thus; conscience speaks to them some broken command, that they learn against their wills. They heed it not, but David did not so. God said, "*Seek ye my face:*" his *heart* answers, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." The heart looks upward to God, and then to itself, "*My heart said.*" It said to thee and then to itself. First, his heart said to God, "Lord, I have encouragement from thee. Thou hast commanded that I should seek thy face." So his heart looked to God, and then it speaks to itself. "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" It looks first to God, and then to all things that come from itself.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 8.—There are divers things considerable of us in this *answer* and *compliance* of David's with God's *command* or *invitation* to him. First, it was *seasonable, and in due time;* presently does David make this return: "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." This is the property and disposition of every wise and prudent Christian, to close with the very first opportunities of God's invitation. Secondly, this answer, as it was seasonable and present, so it was also *full and complete;* the performance was proportionable to the injunction. Ye shall have some kind of people in the world that God bids them do one thing and they will be sure to do the quite contrary; or, at least, not do as much as they should do, but do it by halves. But, now, here David makes return to God in the full extent and proportion of obedience. God said, "*Seek my face,*" and he answered "*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*" Thirdly, it was *real, and entire, and sincere;* "My *heart* said." It is one thing to say it with the *mouth*, and it is another thing to say it with the *heart.* With the *mouth* it is quite easy and ordinary, and nothing more usual. Lord, thy face will we seek, especially in any trouble or calamity, which is incident unto us; but for the heart to say it, that is not so frequent. Fourthly, it was *settled and peremptory*, "Thy face will I seek;" there is nothing shall hinder me of it, or keep me from it, but I will do it against all opposition. Lastly, this protestation of David was *absolute and indefinite and unlimited;* "I will seek thy face;" without prescription of time, or place, or condition; not only now, but hereafter; not only for a time, but for ever, in all seasons, in all estates, in all circumstances, still I shall keep me to this—to hold my communion with thee. Then are we Christians, indeed, when we are so immutably and irreversibly and independently upon the opinions or practices of any other person.—*Condensed from Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8.—God hath promised his favour, and, therefore, his people may seek his favour. Nay, he hath commanded his people to seek his favour, and therefore they should seek it. It is an unadvised folly, during the suspension of God's favour, to unson ourselves, and unpeople ourselves, *i.e.*, by denying the grace and spiritual relation which exist between us and God. That is not the way to gain favour; for when we have undone our relation of children we exclude ourselves from the expectation of favour. No, the wisest and surest way is to seek the renewing of God's loving countenance, and not to be driven away from God by our unbelief.—*Obadiah Sedgwick, in "The Doubting Believer,"* 1653.

Verse 9.—"*Hide not thy face far from me.*" When I seek thy face, vouchsafe, O God, not to hide thy face from me; for to what purpose should I seek it if I cannot find it? and what hope of finding it if thou be bent to hide it?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 9.—"*Put not thy servant away in anger.*" God puts away many in anger for their supposed goodness, but not any at all for their confessed badness.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 9.—"*Thy servant.*" It is a blessed and happy thing to be God's true "*servant.*" Consider what the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's servants (1 Kings x. 8): "Happy are these thy servants," &c. Now Christ Jesus is greater than Solomon (Matt. xii. 42), and so a better Master. Good earthly masters will honour good servants, as Prov. xxvii. 18, "He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured;" chap. xvii. 2, "A wise servant shall have a portion, or inheritance, among the brethren." But however some earthly masters may be Nabals and Labans, yet God will not be so: John xii. 26: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." "If any man serve me, him will my father honour," see Luke xii. 37. The watchful servants are blessed; their master will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them, as Matt. xxv. 21, 23: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—*Thomas Pierson.*

Verse 9.—"*Thou hast been my help; leave me not,*" etc. One act of mercy engages God to another. Men argue thus: I have showed you kindness already, therefore trouble me no more; but because God has shown mercy he is more ready still to show mercy; his mercy in election makes him justify, adopt, glorify.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 9.—"*Leave me not;*" rather, "dismiss me not;" "let not go thy hold of me." This is the proper sense of the Hebrew verb נָטַשׁ, to set a thing loose, to let it go, to abandon it.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 10.—"*When my father and my mother forsake me.*" As there seems to be some difficulty in supposing the psalmist's parents to have "deserted" him, they might perhaps be said to have "*forsaken*" him (as Muis conjectures), that is, to have left him behind them, as being dead.—*James Merrick, M.A.*, 1720—1769.

Verse 10.—"*When my father and my mother forsake me.*" It is indeed the nature of all living creatures, though never so tender of their young ones, yet when they are grown to a ripeness of age and strength, to turn them off to shift for themselves; and even a father and a mother, as tender as they are, have yet somewhat of this common nature in them; for while their children are young they lead them by the hand, but when they are grown up they leave them to their own legs, and if they chance to fall let them rise as they can. But God even then takes his children up, for he knows of what they are made; he knows their strength must be as well supported as their weakness be assisted; he knows they must as well be taken up when they fall, as be held up when they stand.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 10.—"*Father and mother.*" First, who are they? Properly and chiefly our natural parents, of whom we were begotten and born; to whom (under God) we owe our being and breeding. Yet here, not they only; but by *synecdoche* all other kinsfolks, neighbours, friends, acquaintances, or, indeed, more generally yet, all worldly comforts, stays, and helps whatsoever. 2. But, then, why these named the rathest, and the rest to be included in these? Because we promise to ourselves more help from them than from any of the other. We have a nearer relation to, and a greater interest in them than in any other; and they of all other are the unlikeliest to forsake us. The very brute creatures forsake not their young ones. A hen will not desert her chickens, nor a bear endure to be robbed of her whelps. 3. But, then, thirdly, why *both* named—*father* and *mother* too? Partly because it can hardly be imagined that both of them should forsake their child, though one should hap to be unkind. Partly, because the *father's love* being commonly with more *providence*, the *mother's* with more *tenderness;* both together do better express than alone either would do, the abundant love of God towards us, who is infinitely dear

over us, beyond the care of the most provident father, beyond the affection of the tenderest mother. 4. But, then, fourthly, when may they be said to *forsake* us? When at any time they leave us destitute of such help as we stand in need of; whether it be out of *choice*, when they list not to help us, though they might if they would; or out of *necessity*, when they cannot help us, though they would if they could.—*Robert Sanderson.*

Verse 10.—"*Then the Lord will take me up.*" But *dictum factum:* these are but *words:* Are there producible any *deeds* to make it good? Verily, there are, and that to the very letter. When Ishmael's mother, despairing of his life, had *forsaken* him, and laid him down gasping (his last, for ought she knew or could do to help it), in the wilderness, the Lord *took him up;* he opened a new spring of water, and opened her eyes to see it, and so the child was preserved. Genesis xxi. When Moses' parents had also *forsaken* him (for they durst not stand by him any longer), and laid him down among the rushy flags, the Lord *took him up* too. He provided him of a saviour, the king's own daughter, and of a nurse the child's own mother—and so he was preserved too. Exodus ii. 6—9. Take but two examples more, out of either Testament one. David and St. Paul, both *forsaken* of men, both *taken up* of God. How was David forsaken, in Psalm cxlii. 4, when he had looked upon his right hand, and saw no man that would know him; he had no place to fly unto, and no man cared for his soul. But all the while *Dominus ad dextris*, there was one at his right hand (though at first he was not aware of him), ready to *take him up;* as it there followeth, verse 5, "It cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." And how St. Paul was forsaken; take it from himself, 2 Timothy iv. 16, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me:" a heavy case, and had been heavier had there not been one ready to take his part, at the next verse, "Nevertheless the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me," etc. What need we any more witnesses? *In ore duorum*—in the mouth of two such witnesses the point is sufficiently established. But you will yet say, these two might testify what they had already found *post factum.* But David, in the text, pronounceth it *de futuro*, beforehand, and that somewhat confidently: "*The Lord will take me up.*" As he doth also elsewhere: "Sure I am that the Lord will avenge the poor, and maintain the cause of the helpless." Psalm cix. But is there any ground for that? Doubtless there is; a *double* ground; one in the *nature*, another in the *promise* of God. In his *nature* four *qualities* there are (we take leave so to speak, suitably to our own low apprehensions, for in the Godhead there are properly no *qualities*); but call them *qualities* or *attributes*, or what else you will; there are *four perfections* in God, opposite to those *defects* which in our *earthly parents* we have found to be the chief causes why they do so oft *forsake* us; which give us full assurance that he will *take us up* when all other succors fail us. Those are his *love*, his *wisdom*, his *power*, his *eternity*, and all in his nature. To which *four*, add his *promise*, and you have the fulness of all the assurance that can be desired.—*Robert Sanderson.*

Verse 10.—"*The Lord will take me up:*" Hebrew, *will gather me*, that is, take me into his care and keeping. In the civil law we find provision made for outcasts and friendless persons; some hospitals to entertain them, some liberties to comfort and compensate their trouble. 'Tis sure, that in God the forlorn and fatherless find mercy.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 11.—"*Teach me thy way, O Lord.*" Having compared himself to an exposed, deserted infant, adopted by God, he anon fairly asks to be shown how to walk. He asks the grace of being able to observe all his holy commandments, which he never loses sight of through the whole one hundred-and-fifty Psalms. What else could he do? when it was the only path to that heavenly house of God, which he had just declared to be the only wish and desire of his heart.—*Robert Bellarmine* (*Cardinal*), 1542—1621.

Verse 11.—"*Lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*" If a man,

travelling in the King's highway, be robbed between sun and sun, satisfaction is recoverable upon the county where the robbery was made; but if he takes his journey in the night, being an unseasonable time, then it is at his own peril, he must take what falls. So, if a man keep in *God's ways*, he shall be sure of God's protection; but if he stray out of them, he exposeth himself to danger. *Robert Skinner* (*Bishop*), 1636.

Verse 11.—"*Because of mine enemies.*" If once a man commence a professor, the eyes of all are upon him; and well they may, for his profession *in* the world is a separation *from* the world. Believers condemn those by their lives who condemn them by their lips. Righteous David saw many who were waiting to triumph in his mistakes. Hence the more they watched, the more he prayed: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." It may be rendered, *because of mine observers*. Christian, if you dwell in the open tent of licentiousness, the wicked will not walk backward, like modest Shem and Japheth, to cover your shame: but they will walk forward, like cursed Ham, to publish it. Thus they make use of your weakness as a plea for their wickedness. Men are merciless in their censures of Christians; they have no sympathy for their infirmity: while God weighs them in more equal scales, and says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." While a saint is a *dove* in the eyes of God, he is only a *raven* in the estimation of sinners.—*William Secker.*

Verse 13.—"*I had fainted*," etc. Study much the all-sufficiency, the power, the goodness, the unchangeableness of God. 1. The all-sufficiency of God. What fulness there is in him to make up all you can lose for him; what refreshments there are in him to sweeten all you can suffer for him. What fulness! You may as well doubt that all the waters of the ocean cannot fill a spoon, as that the divine fulness cannot be enough to you, if you should have nothing left in this world; for all the waters that cover the sea are not so much as a spoonful, compared with the boundless and infinite fulness of all-sufficiency. What refreshments in him! One drop of divine sweetness is enough to make one in the very agony of the cruellest death to cry out with joy, "The bitterness of death is past." Now in him there are not only drops, but rivers; not a scanty sprinkling, but an infinite fulness. 2. Eye much the power of God, how it can support under the cross, what it can bring to pass for you by the cross. No cross so sharp and grievous, but he can make it sweet and comfortable. No cross so heavy and intolerable, but he can make light and easy. No cross so ignominious and reproachful, but he can turn it to your honour. No cross so fastened to you, but he can easily remove it. 3. His *goodness*. His all-sufficiency and power make him able, his *goodness* makes him willing to do for his people under the cross what his all-sufficiency and almighty power can afford. His *goodness* sets his mighty power a-work for his suffering saints. His *goodness* sets his all-sufficiency, his fulness, abroach for them, so that it runs freely upon them; and never more freely than when they are under the cross. "*I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord*," &c. What is it that makes you ready to *faint* under the cross, or thoughts and foresight of it? Look to the *goodness of God*, there is support.—*Condensed from David Clarkson.*

Verse 13.—"*I had fainted.*" The words in italics are supplied by our translators; but, far from being necessary, they injure the sense. Throw out the words, *I had fainted*, and leave a *break* after the verse, and the elegant figure of the psalmist will be preserved: "Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"———what! what, alas! should have become of me!—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 13.—"*Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*" In the Hebrew this verse is elliptical, as Calvin here translates it. In the French version he supplies the ellipsis, by adding to the end of the

verse the words, "C'estoit fait de moy," "I had perished." In our English version, the words, "I had fainted," are introduced as a supplement in the beginning of the verse. Both the supplement of Calvin, and that of our English version, which are substantially the same, doubtless explain the meaning of the passage; but they destroy the elegant abrupt form of the expression employed by the psalmist, who breaks off in the middle of his discourse without completing the sentence, although what he meant to say is very evident.—*Editorial note to Calvin, in loc.*

Verse 13.—Under sore trouble and distress, labour to exercise a strong and lively faith. It was a noble and heroic resolution in that holy man Job, under his singular trials (Job xiii. 15): "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;" as if he had said, Let my strokes be never so sore and heavy, yet I will not let go my grips of his word and promises, I will not raze these foundations of my hope. It was the way the psalmist kept himself from sinking under his heavy burdens: "*I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*" . . . . Faith brings new strength and auxiliary supplies of grace from heaven, when the former supply is exhausted and spent; whereof David had the sweet experience here. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the soul, so he is pleased to come in with seasonable supplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, answerable to their present exigences and pressures; and thus he doth from time to time feed the believer's lamp with fresh oil, give in more faith, more love, more hope, and more desires; and hereby he gives power to the faint, and strengthens the things which remain when ready to die.—*John Willison.*

Verse 13.—"*Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living:*" a cordial made up of three sovereign ingredients—a hope *to see;* and to see *the goodness of God;* and the goodness of God *in the land of the living.—Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 13.—"*The land of the living.*" Alas! what a *land of the living* is this, in which there are more dead than living, more under ground than above it; where the earth is fuller of graves than houses; where life lies trembling under the hand of death; and where death hath power to tyrannize over life! No, my soul, *there* only is the *land of the living* where there are none but the living; where there is a church, not militant, but triumphant; a church indeed, but no churchyard, because none dead, nor none that can die; where life is not passive, nor death active; where life sits crowned, and where death is swallowed up in victory.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 14.—"*Wait on the Lord, be of good courage.*" *Be comfortable,* hold fast (as the Greek hath), *be manly,* or, *quit thee as a man;* which word the apostle useth. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. These are the words of encouragement against remissness, fear, faintness of heart, or other infirmities.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 14.—"*Wait on the Lord, be of good courage.*"

Stand but your ground, your ghostly foes will fly—
Hell trembles at a heaven-directed eye;
Choose rather to defend than to assail—
Self-confidence will in the conflict fail:
When you are challenged you may dangers meet—
True *courage* is a fixed, not sudden heat;
Is always humble, lives in self-distrust,
And will itself into no danger thrust.
Devote yourself to God, and you will find
God fights the battles of a will resigned.
Love Jesus! love will no base fear endure—
Love Jesus! and of conquest rest secure.

Thomas Ken (Bishop), 1637—1710-11.

Verse 14.—Think not the government is out of Christ's hand, when men are doing many sad things, and giving many heavy blows to the work of God. No, no; men are but his hand; and it is the hand of God that justly and righteously is lying heavy upon his people. Look above men, then; you have not to do with them: there is a turn of matters, just as he is pleased to turn his hand.—*Ralph Erskine*, 1685—1752.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—The relation of illumination to salvation, or the need of light if men would be saved.

Verse 1.—The Christian hero, and the secret springs of his courage.

Verse 1.—The believer's fearless challenge.

Verse 2.—The character, number, power, and cruelty of the enemies of the church, and the mysterious way in which they have been defeated.

Verse 3.—Christian peace. I. Exhibited in the calm foresight of trouble. II. Displayed in the confident endurance of affliction. III. Sustained by divine help and past experience (*verses* 1, 2). IV. Producing the richest results, glory to God, etc.

Verse 4.—Model Christian life. I. Unity of desire. II. Earnestness of action. III. Nearness of communion. IV. Heavenliness of contemplation. V. Progress in divine education.

Verse 4.—The affection of moral esteem towards God.—*Thomas Chalmers.*

Verse 4.—A breathing after God.—*R. Sibbes's Sermon.*

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Sabbath occupations and heavenly delights.

Verse 4 (*final clause*).—Matters for enquiry in the Temple of old opened up in the light of the New Testament.

Verse 5.—The threefold shelter. See Exposition.

Verse 6.—The saint's present triumph over his spiritual foes, his practical gratitude, and his vocal praises.

Verse 7.—Prayer. To whom addressed? How? "*Cry*," etc. When? *Left indefinite.* On what it is based? "*Mercy.*" What it needs? "*Hear*," "*answer.*"

Verse 8.—The heart in tune with its God. Note, the promptness, heartiness, personality, unreservedness, accuracy, and resolution of the response to the precept.

Verse 8.—The successful seeker.—*R. Sibbes's Sermon.*

Verse 8.—The echo. See Spurgeon's Sermons. No. 767.

Verse 9.—I. Desertion deprecated in all its forms. II. Experience pleaded. III. Divine aid implored.

Verse 9.—The horror of saints at the hell of sinners.—*James Scot.*

Verse 10.—The portion of the orphan, the comfort of the persecuted, the paradise of the departing.

Verse 11.—The plain man's pathway desired, described, divinely approved, "*thy way*," "*a plain way*," and divinely taught, "*teach me, O Lord*," "*lead me.*"

Verse 13.—Faith, its precedence of sight, its objects, its sustaining power.

Verse 13.—Believing to see. See Spurgeon's Sermons. No. 766.

Verse 14.—The believer's position, "*wait;*" his condition, "*good courage;*" his support, "*he shall*," etc.; his perseverance, "*wait*" repeated a second time; his reward.

WORKS ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

Excellent Encouragements against Afflictions, containing David's Triumph over Distress; or, an Exposition of Psalm XXVII. By Thomas Pierson, M.A. [Reprinted in Nichol's Series of Puritan Commentaries.]

Meditations upon the XXVIIth Psalme of David. By Sir Richard Baker. [See "Works," p. 10.]

PSALM XXVIII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—*Again, the title "A Psalm of David," is too general to give us any clue to the occasion upon which it was written. Its position, as following the twenty-seventh, seems to have been designed, for it is a most suitable pendant and sequel to it. It is another of those "songs in the night" of which the pen of David was so prolific. The thorn at the breast of the nightingale was said by the old naturalists to make it sing: David's griefs made him eloquent in holy psalmody. The main pleading of this Psalm is that the suppliant may not be confounded with the workers of iniquity for whom he expresses the utmost abhorrence; it may suit any slandered saint who, being misunderstood by men, and treated by them as an unworthy character, is anxious to stand aright before the bar of God. The Lord Jesus may be seen here pleading as the representative of his people.*

DIVISION.—*The first and second verses earnestly entreat audience of the Lord in a time of dire emergency. From verses 2—5, the portion of the wicked is described and deprecated. In verses 6, 7, and 8, praise is given for the Lord's mercy in hearing prayer, and the Psalm concludes with a general petition for the whole host of militant believers.*

EXPOSITION.

UNTO thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me, lest, *if* thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

1. "*Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock.*"—A cry is the natural expression of sorrow, and is a suitable utterance when all other modes of appeal fail us; but the cry must be alone directed to the Lord, for to cry to man is to waste our entreaties upon the air. When we consider the readiness of the Lord to hear, and his ability to aid, we shall see good reason for directing all our appeals at once to the God of our salvation, and shall use language of firm resolve like that in the text, "I will cry." The immutable Jehovah is our *rock*, the immovable foundation of all our hopes and our refuge in time of trouble: we are fixed in our determination to flee to him as our stronghold in every hour of danger. It will be in vain to call to the rocks in the day of judgment, but our rock attends to our cries. "*Be not silent to me.*" Mere formalists may be content without answers to their prayers, but genuine suppliants cannot; they are not satisfied with the results of prayer itself in calming the mind and subduing the will—they must go further and obtain actual replies from heaven, or they cannot rest; and those replies they long to receive at once, if possible; they dread even a little of God's silence. God's voice is often so terrible that it shakes the wilderness; but his silence is equally full of awe to an eager suppliant. When God seems to close his ear, we must not therefore close our mouths, but rather cry with more earnestness; for when our note grows shrill with eagerness and grief, he will not long deny us a hearing. What a dreadful case should we be in if the Lord should become for ever silent to our prayers! This thought suggested itself to David, and he turned it into a plea, thus teaching us to argue and reason with God in our prayers. "*Lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*" Deprived of the God who answers prayer, we should be in a more pitiable plight than the dead in the grave, and should soon sink to the same level as the lost in hell. We *must* have answers to prayer: ours is an urgent case of dire necessity; surely the Lord will

speak peace to our agitated minds, for he never can find it in his heart to permit his own elect to perish.

2. This is much to the same effect as the first verse, only that it refers to future as well as present pleadings. Hear me! Hear me! "*Hear the voice of my supplications!*" This is the burden of both verses. We cannot be put off with a refusal when we are in the spirit of prayer; we labour, use importunity, and agonise in supplications until a hearing is granted us. The word "supplications," in the plural, shows the number, continuance, and variety of a good man's prayers, while the expression, "hear *the voice*," seems to hint that there is an inner meaning, or heart-voice, about which spiritual men are far more concerned than for their outward and audible utterances. A silent prayer may have a louder voice than the cries of those priests who sought to awaken Baal with their shouts. "*When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle:*" which holy place was the type of our Lord Jesus; and if we would gain acceptance, we must turn ourselves evermore to the blood-besprinkled mercy seat of his atonement. Uplifted hands have ever been a form of devout posture, and are intended to signify a reaching upward towards God, a readiness, an eagerness to receive the blessing sought after. We stretch out empty hands, for we are beggars; we lift them up, for we seek heavenly supplies; we lift them towards the mercy seat of Jesus, for there our expectation dwells. O that whenever we use devout gestures, we may possess contrite hearts, and so speed well with God.

3 Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief *is* in their hearts.

4 Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

3. "*Draw me not away with the wicked.*"—They shall be dragged off to hell like felons of old drawn on a hurdle to Tyburn, like logs drawn to the fire, like fagots to the oven. David fears lest he should be bound up in their bundle, drawn to their doom; and the fear is an appropriate one for every godly man. The best of the wicked are dangerous company in time, and would make terrible companions for eternity; we must avoid them in their pleasures, if we would not be confounded with them in their miseries. "*And with the workers of iniquity.*" These are overtly sinful, and their judgment will be sure; Lord, do not make us to drink of their cup. Activity is found with the wicked even if it be lacking to the righteous. Oh! to be "workers" for the Lord. "*Which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*" They have learned the manners of the place to which they are going: the doom of liars is their portion for ever, and lying is their conversation on the road. Soft words, oily with pretended love, are the deceitful meshes of the infernal net in which Satan catches the precious life; many of his children are learned in his abominable craft, and fish with their father's nets, almost as cunningly as he himself could do it. It is a sure sign of baseness when the tongue and the heart do not ring to the same note. Deceitful men are more to be dreaded than wild beasts: it were better to be shut up in a pit with serpents than to be compelled to live with liars. He who cries "peace" too loudly, means to sell it if he can get his price. "Good wine needs no bush:" if he were so very peaceful he would not need to say so; he means mischief, make sure of that.

4. When we view the wicked simply as such, and not as our fellow-men, our indignation against sin leads us entirely to coincide with the acts of divine justice which punish evil, and to wish that justice might use her power to

restrain by her terrors the cruel and unjust ; but still the desires of the present verse, as our version renders it, are not readily made consistent with the spirit of the Christian dispensation, which seeks rather the reformation than the punishment of sinners. If we view the words before us as prophetic, or as in the future tense, declaring a fact, we are probably nearer to the true meaning than that given in our version. Ungodly reader, what will be your lot when the Lord deals with you according to your desert, and weighs out to you his wrath, not only in proportion to what you have actually done, but according to what you would have done if you could. Our "*endeavours*" are taken as facts ; God takes the will for the deed, and punishes or rewards accordingly. Not in this life, but certainly in the next, God will repay his enemies to their faces, and give them the wages of their sins. Not according to their fawning words, but after the measure of their mischievous deeds, will the Lord mete out vengeance to them that know him not.

5. "*Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands.*" God works in creation—nature teems with proofs of his wisdom and goodness, yet purblind atheists refuse to see him : he works in providence, ruling and overruling, and his hand is very manifest in human history, yet the infidel will not discern him : he works in grace—remarkable conversions are still met with on all hands, yet the ungodly refuse to see the operations of the Lord. Where angels wonder, carnal men despise. God condescends to teach, and man refuses to learn. "*He shall destroy them :*" he will make them "behold, and wonder, and perish." If they would not see the hand of judgment upon others, they shall feel it upon themselves. Both soul and body shall be overwhelmed with utter destruction for ever and ever. "*And not build them up.*" God's curse is positive and negative ; his sword has two edges, and cuts right and left. Their heritage of evil shall prevent the ungodly receiving any good ; the ephah shall be too full of wrath to contain a grain of hope. They have become like old, rotten, decayed houses of timber, useless to the owner, and harbouring all manner of evil, and, therefore, the Great Builder will demolish them utterly. Incorrigible offenders may expect speedy destruction : they who will not mend, shall be thrown away as worthless. Let us be very attentive to all the lessons of God's word and work, lest being found disobedient to the divine will, we be made to suffer the divine wrath.

6 Blessed *be* the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 The LORD *is* my strength and my shield ; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped : therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth ; and with my song will I praise him.

8 The LORD *is* their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

6. "*Blessed be the Lord.*" Saints are full of benedictions ; they are a blessed people, and a blessing people ; but they give their best blessings, the fat of their sacrifices, to their glorious Lord. Our Psalm was prayer up to this point, and now it turns to praise. They who pray well, will soon praise well : prayer and praise are the two lips of the soul ; two bells to ring out sweet and acceptable music in the ears of God ; two angels to climb Jacob's ladder ; two altars smoking with incense ; two of Solomon's lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh ; they are two young roes that are twins, feeding upon the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. "*Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.*" Real praise is established upon sufficient and constraining reasons ; it is not irrational emotion, but rises, like a pure spring, from the deeps of experience. Answered prayers should be acknowledged. Do we not often fail in this duty ? Would it not greatly encourage others, and strengthen ourselves, if we faithfully recorded divine goodness, and made a point of extolling it with our tongue ? God's mercy is not such an inconsiderable thing that we

may safely venture to receive it without so much as thanks. We should shun ingratitude, and live daily in the heavenly atmosphere of thankful love.

7. Here is David's declaration and confession of faith, coupled with a testimony from his experience. "*The Lord is my strength.*" The Lord employs his power on our behalf, and moreover, infuses strength into us in our weakness. The psalmist, by an act of appropriating faith, takes the omnipotence of Jehovah to be his own. Dependence upon the invisible God gives great independence of spirit, inspiring us with confidence more than human. "*And my shield.*" Thus David found both sword and shield in his God. The Lord preserves his people from unnumbered ills; and the Christian warrior, sheltered behind his God, is far more safe than the hero when covered with his shield of brass or triple steel. "*My heart trusted in him, and I am helped.*" Heart work is sure work; heart trust is never disappointed. Faith must come before help, but help will never be long behindhand. Every day the believer may say, "I am helped," for the divine assistance is vouchsafed us every moment, or we should go back unto perdition; when more manifest help is needed, we have but to put faith into exercise, and it will be given us. "*Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*" The heart is mentioned twice to show the truth of his faith and his joy. Observe the adverb "*greatly*," we need not be afraid of being too full of rejoicing at the remembrance of grace received. We serve a great God, let us greatly rejoice in him. A song is the soul's fittest method of giving vent to its happiness, it were well if we were more like the singing lark, and less like the croaking raven. When the heart is glowing, the lips should not be silent. When God blesses us, we should bless him with all our heart.

8. "*The Lord is their strength.*"—The heavenly experience of one believer is a pattern of the life of all. To all the militant church, without exception, Jehovah is the same as he was to his servant David, "the least of them shall be as David." They need the same aid and they shall have it, for they are loved with the same love, written in the same book of life, and one with the same anointed Head. "*And he is the saving strength of his anointed.*" Here behold king David as the type of our Lord Jesus, our covenant Head, our anointed Prince, through whom all blessings come to us. He has achieved full salvation for us, and we desire saving strength from him, and as we share in the unction which is so largely shed upon him, we expect to partake in his salvation. Glory be unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has magnified the power of his grace in his only begotten Son, whom he has anointed to be a Prince and a Saviour unto his people.

9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

9. This is a prayer for the church militant, written in short words, but full of weighty meaning. We must pray for the whole church, and not for ourselves alone. "*Save thy people.*" Deliver them from their enemies, preserve them from their sins, succour them under their troubles, rescue them from their temptations, and ward off from them every ill. There is a plea hidden in the expression, "*thy people:*" for it may be safely concluded that God's interest in the church, as his own portion, will lead him to guard it from destruction. "*Bless thine inheritance.*" Grant positive blessings, peace, plenty, prosperity, happiness; make all thy dearly-purchased and precious heritage to be comforted by thy Spirit. Revive, refresh, enlarge and sanctify thy church. "*Feed them also.*" Be a shepherd to thy flock, let their bodily and spiritual wants be plentifully supplied. By thy word, and ordinances, direct, rule, sustain, and satisfy those who are the sheep of thy hand. "*And lift them up for ever.*" Carry them in thine arms on earth, and then lift them into thy bosom in heaven. Elevate their minds and thoughts, spiritualise their affections, make them heavenly, Christlike, and full of God. O Lord, answer this our petition, for Jesus' sake.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Verse 1.—"*Unto thee do I cry.*" It is of the utmost importance that we should have a *definite object* on which to fix our thoughts. Man, at the best of times, has but little power for realising abstractions; but least of all in his time of sorrow. Then he is helpless; then he needs every possible aid; and if his mind wander in vacancy, it will soon weary, and sink down exhausted. God has graciously taken care that this need not be done. He has so manifested himself to man in his word, that the afflicted one can fix his mind's eye on him, as the definite object of his faith, and hope, and prayer. "Call unto *me*, and *I* will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jer. xxxiii. 3. This was what the psalmist did; and the definiteness of God, as the object of his trust in prayer, is very clearly marked. And specially great is the privilege of the *Christian* in this matter. He can fix his eye on Jesus; he, without any very great stretch of imagination, can picture that Holy One looking down upon him; listening to him; feeling for him; preparing to answer him. Dear reader, in the time of your trouble, do not roam; do not send out your sighs into vacancy; do not let your thoughts wander, as though they were looking for some one on whom to fix; for some one to whom you could tell the story of your heart's need and desolation. Fix your heart as the psalmist did, and say, "Unto *thee* will I cry." . . . Oh! happy is that man, who feels and knows that when trouble comes, he cannot be bewildered and confused by the stroke, no matter how heavy it may be. Sorrow-stricken he will be, but he has his resource, and he *knows* it, and will avail himself of it. His is no vague theory of the general sympathy of God for man; his is a knowledge of God, as a personal and feeling God; he says with the psalmist, "Unto *thee* will I cry."—*Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 1.—"*My rock.*" One day a female friend called on the Rev. William Evans, a pious minister in England, and asked how he felt himself. "I am weakness itself," he replied; "but I am on the *Rock.* I do not experience those transports which some have expressed in the view of death; but my dependence is on the mercy of God in Christ. Here my religion began, and here it must end."

Verse 1.—"*My rock.*" The Rev. John Rees, of Crown-street, Soho, London, was visited on his death-bed by the Rev. John Leifchild, who very seriously asked him to describe the state of his mind. This appeal to the honour of his religion roused him, and so freshened his dying lamp, that raising himself up in his bed, he looked his friend in the face, and with great deliberation, energy, and dignity, uttered the following words:—"Christ in his person, Christ in the love of his heart, and Christ in the power of his arm, is the Rock on which I rest; and now" (reclining his head gently on the pillow), "Death, strike!"—*K. Arvine.*

Verse 1.—"*Be not silent to me.*" Let us next observe *what the heart desires from God.* It is that he would speak. "*Be not silent to me.*" Under these circumstances, when we make our prayer, we desire that God would let us know that he hears us, and that he would appear for us, and that he would say, he is our Father. And what do we desire God to say? We want him to let us know that he hears us; we want to hear him speak as distinctly to us, as we feel that we have spoken to him. We want to *know, not only by faith* that we have been heard, but *by God's having spoken to us on the very subject whereupon we have spoken to him.* When we feel thus assured that God has heard us, we can with the deepest confidence leave the whole matter about which we have been praying, in his hands. Perhaps an answer cannot come for a long time; perhaps things, meanwhile, seem working in a contrary way; it may be, that there is no direct appearance at all of God upon the scene; still faith will hold up and be strong; and there will be comfort in the heart, from the felt consciousness that God has heard our cry about the matter, and that he has told

us so. We shall say to ourselves, "God knows all about it; God has in point of fact told me so; therefore I am in peace." And let it be enough for us that God tells us this, when he will perhaps tell us no more; let us not want to try and induce him to speak much, when it is his will to speak but little: the best answer we can have at certain times is simply the statement that "he hears;" by this answer to our prayer he at once encourages and exercises our faith. "It is said," said Rutherford, speaking of the Saviour's delay in responding to the request of the Syrophenician woman, "'he *answered* not a word,' but it is not said, he *heard* not a word. These two differ much. Christ often heareth when he doth not answer—his *not* answering *is an answer*, and speaks thus—'pray on, go on and cry, for the Lord holdeth his door fast bolted,' not to keep you out, but that you may knock, and knock, and it shall be opened.'"—*Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 1.—"*Lest . . . I become like them that go down into the pit.*" Thou seest, great God, my sad situation. Nothing to me is great or desirable upon this earth but the felicity of serving thee, and yet the misery of my destiny, and the duties of my state, bring me into connection with men who regard all godliness as a thing to be censured and derided. With secret horror I daily hear them blaspheming the ineffable gifts of thy grace, and ridiculing the faith and fervour of the godly as mere imbecility of mind. Exposed to such impiety, all my consolation, O my God, is to make my cries of distress ascend to the foot of thy throne. Although for the present, these sacrilegious blasphemies only awaken in my soul emotions of horror and pity, yet I fear that at last they may enfeeble me and seduce me into a crooked course of policy, unworthy of thy glory, and of the gratitude which I owe to thee. I fear that insensibly I may become such a coward as to blush at thy name, such a sinner as to resist the impulses of thy grace, such a traitor as to withhold my testimony against sin, such a self-deceiver as to disguise my criminal timidity by the name of prudence. Already I feel that this poison is insinuating itself into my heart, for while I would not have my conduct resemble that of the wicked who surround me, yet I am too much biassed by the fear of giving them offence. I dare not imitate them, but I am almost as much afraid of irritating them. I know that it is impossible both to please a corrupt world and a holy God, and yet I so far lose sight of this truth, that instead of sustaining me in decision, it only serves to render my vacillation the more inexcusable. What remains for me but to implore thy help! Strengthen me, O Lord, against these declensions so injurious to thy glory, so fatal to the fidelity which is due to thee. Cause me to hear thy strengthening and encouraging voice. If the voice of thy grace be not lifted up in my spirit, reanimating my feeble faith, I feel that there is but a step between me and despair. I am on the brink of the precipice, I am ready to fall into a criminal complicity with those who would fain drag me down with them into the pit.—*Jean Baptiste Massillon*, 1663—1742, *freely translated by C. H. S.*

Verse 2.—"*I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.*" Called דְּבִיר, *debhir*, because there-hence God spake and gave answer. Toward this (a type of Christ, the Word essential), David lifteth up his hands, that it might be as a ladder, whereby his prayer might get up to heaven.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—"*Draw me not away with the wicked . . . . which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*" The godly man abhors dissimulation towards men; his heart goes along with his tongue, he cannot flatter and hate, commend and censure. "Let love be without dissimulation." Romans xii. 9. Dissembled love is worse than hatred; counterfeiting of friendship is no better than a lie (Psalm lxxviii. 36), for there is a pretence of that which is not. Many are like Joab: "He took Amasa by the beard to kiss him, and smote him with his sword in the fifth rib, that he died." There is a river in Spain, where the fish seem to be of a golden colour, but take them out of the water, and they are like other fish. All is not gold that glitters;

there are some pretend much kindness, but they are like great veins which have little blood; if you lean upon them they are as a leg out of joint. For my part, I much question his truth towards God, that will flatter and lie to his friend. "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander is a fool." Proverbs x. 18.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3.—"*Draw me not out with.*" An allusion, I conceive, to a shepherd selecting out a certain portion of his flock. "*Reckon me not among.*"—*Professor Lee.*

Verse 3.—"*Draw me not away.*" אַל־תִּמְשְׁכֵנִי from מָשַׁךְ; that signifies, both to draw and apprehend, will be best rendered here, *seize not on me*, as he that *seizeth* on any to *carry* or *drag* him to *execution.*—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 4.—"*Give them according to their deeds,*" etc. Here, again, occurs the difficult question about praying for vengeance, which, however, I shall despatch in a few words. In the first place, then, it is unquestionable, that if the flesh move us to seek revenge, the desire is wicked in the sight of God. He not only forbids us to imprecate evil upon our enemies in revenge for private injuries, but it cannot be otherwise than that all those desires which spring from hatred must be disordered. David's example, therefore, must not be alleged by those who are driven by their own intemperate passion to seek vengeance. The holy prophet is not inflamed here by his own private sorrow to devote his enemies to destruction; but laying aside the desire of the flesh, he gives judgment concerning the matter itself. Before a man can, therefore, denounce vengeance against the wicked, he must first shake himself free from all improper feelings in his own mind. In the second place, prudence must be exercised, that the heinousness of the evils which offend us drive us not to intemperate zeal, which happened even to Christ's disciples, when they desired that fire might be brought from heaven to consume those who refused to entertain their Master. Luke ix. 54. They pretended, it is true, to act according to the example of Elias, but Christ severely rebuked them, and told them that they knew not by what spirit they were actuated. In particular, we must observe this general rule, that we cordially desire and labour for the welfare of the whole human race. Thus it will come to pass, that we shall not only give way to the exercise of God's mercy, but shall also wish the conversion of those who seem obstinately to rush upon their own destruction. In short, David, being free from every evil passion, and likewise endued with the spirit of discretion and judgment, pleads here not so much his own cause as the cause of God. And by this prayer, he further reminds both himself and the faithful, that although the wicked may give themselves loose reins in the commission of every species of vice with impunity for a time, they must at length stand before the judgment-seat of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours.*" Yes, great God, since thou hast from the beginning been only occupied in saving men, thou wilt surely strike with an eternal malediction these children of iniquity who appear to have been born only to be lost themselves, and to destroy others. The very benevolence towards mankind solicits thy thunders against these corrupters of society. The more thou hast done for our race, the more surely will the severity of thy justice reveal itself in destroying the wretches whose only study is to counteract thy goodness towards mankind. They labour incessantly to put men far away from thee, O my God, and in return thou wilt put them far away from thee for ever. They count it great gain to make their fellows thine enemies, and they shall have the desperate consolation of being such themselves to all eternity. What more fitting punishment for the wretches who desire to make all hearts rebel against thine adorable Majesty, than to lie through the baseness of their nature, under the eternal and frightful necessity of hating thee for ever.—*Jean Baptiste Massillon, rendered very freely by C. H. S.*

Verse 4.—"*Give them according to their deeds.*" The *Egyptians* killed the

Hebrew male children, and God smote the firstborn of Egypt. *Sisera*, who thought to destroy Israel with his iron chariots, was himself killed with an iron nail, stuck through his temples. *Adoni-bezek*, Judges i. 5—7. *Gideon* slew forty elders of Succoth, and his sons were murdered by Abimelech. *Abimelech* slew seventy sons of Gideon upon one stone, and his own head was broken by a piece of millstone thrown by a woman. *Samson* fell by the "lust of the eye," and before death the Philistines put out his eyes. *Agag*, 1 Sam. xx. 33. *Saul* slew the Gibeonites, and seven of his sons were hung up before the Lord. 2 Sam. xxi. 1—9. *Ahab*, after coveting Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 19, fulfilled 2 Kings ix. 24—26. *Jeroboam*, the same hand that was stretched forth against the altar was withered, 1 Kings xiii. 1—6. *Joab* having killed Abner, Amasa, and Absalom, was put to death by Solomon. *Daniel's accusers* thrown into the lion's den meant for Daniel. *Haman* hung upon the gallows designed for Mordecai. *Judas* purchased the field of blood, and then went and hanged himself. So in the history of *later days*, Bajazet was carried about by Tamerlane in an iron cage, as he intended to have carried Tamerlane. *Mazentius* built a bridge to entrap Constantine, and was overthrown himself on that very spot. *Alexander VI.* was poisoned by the wine he had prepared for another. *Charles IX.* made the streets of Paris to stream with Protestant blood, and soon after blood streamed from all parts of his body in a bloody sweat. *Cardinal Beaton* condemned George Wishart to death, and presently died a violent death himself. He was murdered in bed, and his body was laid out in the same window from which he had looked upon Wishart's execution.—*G. S. Bowes, in "Illustrative Gatherings."*

Verse 4.—"*Render to them their desert.*" Meditate on God's righteousness, that it is not only his will, but his nature to punish sin; sin must damn thee without Christ, there is not only a possibility or probability that sin may ruin, but without an interest in Christ it must do so; whet much upon thy heart that *must;* God cannot but hate sin, because he is holy; and he cannot but punish sin, because he is righteous. God must not forego his own nature to gratify our humours.—*Christopher Fowler, in "Morning Exercises,"* 1676.

Verse 4.—He prayeth against his enemies, not out of any private revenge, but being led by the infallible spirit of prophecy, looking through these men to the enemies of Christ, and of his people in all ages.—*David Dickson.*

Verses 4, 5.—In these verses, as indeed in most of the imprecatory passages, the imperative and the future are used promiscuously: "*Give them——render them———he shall destroy them.*" If therefore, the verbs, in all such passages, were uniformly rendered in the "future," every objection against the Scripture imprecations would vanish at once, and they would appear clearly to be what they are, namely, prophecies of the divine judgments, which have been since executed against the Jews, and which will be executed against all the enemies of Jehovah, and his Christ; whom neither the "works" of creation, nor those of redemption, can lead to repentance.—*George Horne.*

Verse 6.—"*He hath heard.*" Prayer is the best remedy in a calamity. This is indeed a true *catholicum*, a general remedy for every malady. Not like the empiric's *catholicum*, which sometimes may work, but for the most part fails: but that which upon assured evidence and constant experience hath its *probatum est;* being that which the most wise, learned, honest, and skilful Physician that ever was, or can be, hath prescribed—even he that teacheth us how to bear what is to be borne, or how to heal and help what hath been borne.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 7.—"*The Lord is my strength.*" Oh, sweet consolation! If a man have a burthen upon him, yet if he have *strength* added to him, if the burthen be doubled, yet if his *strength* be trebled, the burden will not be heavier, but lighter than it was before to his natural strength; so if our afflictions be heavy, and we cry out, Oh, we cannot bear them! yet if we cannot bear them with

our own strength, why may we not bear them with the strength of Jesus Christ? Do we think that Christ could not bear them? or if we dare not think but that Christ could bear them, why may not we come to bear them? Some may question, can we have the strength of Christ? Yes; that very strength is made over to us by faith, for so the Scripture saith frequently, *The Lord is our strength; God is our strength; The Lord Jehovah is our strength; Christ is our strength* (Psalm xxviii. 7; xliii. 2; cxviii. 14; Isaiah xii. 2; Hab. iii. 19; Col. i. 11); and, therefore, is Christ's strength ours, made over unto us, that we may be able to bear whatsoever lies upon us.—*Isaac Ambrose.*

Verse 7.—"*The Lord is my strength*" inwardly, "*and my shield*" outwardly. Faith finds both these in Jehovah, and the one not without the other, for what is a shield without strength, or strength without a shield? "*My heart trusted in him, and I am helped:*" the idea of the former sentence is here carried out, that outward help was granted to inward confidence.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 7.—"*My heart trusted in him, and I am helped.*" Faith substantiateth things not yet seen; it altereth the tenses, saith one, and putteth the future into the present tense as here.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8.—"*The Lord is their strength:*" not mine only, but the strength of every believer. Note—the saints rejoice in their friends' comforts as well as their own; for as we have not the less benefit by the light of the sun, so neither by the light of God's countenance, for others sharing therein; for we are sure there is enough for all, and enough for each. This is our communion with all saints, that God is their strength and ours; Christ their Lord and ours. 1 Cor. i. 2. He is their strength, the strength of all Israel, because he is the saving strength of "*his anointed,*" *i. e.*, 1. Of David in the type: God in strengthening him that was their king and fought their battles, strengthened the whole kingdom. He calls himself God's anointed, because it was the unction he had received that exposed him to the envy of his enemies, and therefore entitled him to the divine protection. 2. Of Christ, his Anointed, his Messiah, in the antitype. God was his "*saving strength,*" qualified him for his undertaking, and carried him through it.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 9.—"*Lift them up.*" The word here used may mean *sustain* them, or *support* them; but it more properly means *bear*, and would be best expressed by a reference to the fact, that the shepherd carries the feeble, the young, and the sickly of his flock in his arms, or that he lifts them up when unable themselves to rise.—*Albert Barnes.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—A sinner's wise resolution in the hour of despondency.

Verse 1.—The saint's fear of becoming like the ungodly.

Verse 1.—God's silence—what terror may lie in it.

Verse 1 (*last clause*).—How low a soul may sink when God hides his face.

Verses 1, 2.—Prayer. I. *Its nature—a "cry."* 1. The utterance of life. 2. The expression of pain. 3. The pleading of need. 4. The voice of deep earnestness. II. *Its object—"O Lord, my rock."* God as our Foundation, Refuge, and immutable Friend. III. *Its aim—"Hear," "Be not silent."* We expect an answer, a clear and manifest answer, a speedy answer, a suitable answer, an effectual answer. IV. *Its medium—"Toward thy holy oracle."* Our Lord Jesus, the true mercy seat, etc.

Verse 3.—The characters to be avoided, the doom to be dreaded, the grace to keep us from both.

Verse 4.—Measure for measure, or punishment proportioned to desert.

Verse 4.—Endeavour the measure of sin rather than mere result. Hence some are guilty of sins which they were unable to commit.

Verse 5.—Culpable negligence constantly persisted in, losing much blessing, and involving terrible condemnation.

Verse 6.—Answered prayers, a retrospect and song.

Verse 7.—The heart's possessions, confidence, experience, joy, and music.

Verse 7.—Adoring God for his mercies. I. What God is to the believer. II. What should be the disposition of our hearts towards him.—*C. Simeon.*

Verse 8.—All power given to believers because of their union with Jesus.

Verse 9.—"A prayer for the church militant." See Exposition and Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 768.

PSALM XXIX.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David. *The title affords us no information beyond the fact that David is the author of this sublime song.*

SUBJECT.—*It seems to be the general opinion of modern annotators, that this Psalm is meant to express the glory of God as heard in the pealing thunder, and seen in an equinoctial tornado. Just as the eighth Psalm is to be read by moonlight, when the stars are bright, as the nineteenth needs the rays of the rising sun to bring out its beauty, so this can be best rehearsed beneath the black wing of tempest, by the glare of the lightning, or amid that dubious dusk which heralds the war of elements. The verses march to the tune of thunderbolts. God is everywhere conspicuous, and all the earth is hushed by the majesty of his presence. The word of God in the law and gospel is here also depicted in its majesty of power. True ministers are sons of thunder, and the voice of God in Christ Jesus is full of majesty. Thus we have God's works and God's word joined together: let no man put them asunder by a false idea that theology and science can by any possibility oppose each other. We may, perhaps, by a prophetic glance, behold in this Psalm the dread tempests of the latter days, and the security of the elect people.*

DIVISION.—*The first two verses are a call to adoration. From* 3 *to* 10 *the path of the tempest is traced, the attributes of God's word are rehearsed, and God magnified in all the terrible grandeur of his power; and the last verse sweetly closes the scene with the assurance that the omnipotent Jehovah will give both strength and peace to his people. Let heaven and earth pass away, the Lord will surely bless his people.*

EXPOSITION.

GIVE unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

1. "*Give,*" *i.e.*, ascribe. Neither men nor angels can confer anything upon Jehovah, but they should recognise his glory and might, and ascribe it to him in their songs and in their hearts. "*Unto the Lord,*" and unto him alone, must honour be given. Natural causes, as men call them, are God in action, and we must not ascribe power to them, but to the infinite Invisible who is the true source of all. "*O ye mighty.*" Ye great ones of earth and of heaven, kings and angels, join in rendering worship to the blessed and only Potentate; ye lords among men need thus to be reminded, for ye often fail where humbler men are ardent; but fail no longer, bow your heads at once, and loyally do homage to the King of kings. How frequently do grandees and potentates think it beneath them to fear the Lord; but, when they have been led to extol Jehovah, their piety has been the greatest jewel in their crowns. "*Give unto the Lord glory and strength,*" both of which men are too apt to claim for themselves, although they are the exclusive prerogatives of the self-existent God. Let crowns and swords acknowledge their dependence upon God. Not to your arms, O kings, give ye the glory, nor look for strength to your hosts of warriors, for all your pomp is but as a fading flower, and your might is as a shadow which declineth. When shall the day arrive when kings and princes shall count it their delight to glorify their God? "All worship be to God only," let this be emblazoned on every coat of arms.

2. "*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.*" A third time the admonition is given, for men are backward in glorifying God, and especially great men, who are often too much swollen with their own glory to spare time to give God his rightful praise, although nothing more is asked of them than is most just and right. Surely men should not need so much pressing to give what

is due, especially when the payment is so pleasant. Unbelief and distrust, complaining and murmuring, rob God of his honour; in this respect, even the saints fail to give due glory to their King. "*Worship the Lord*," bow before him with devout homage and sacred awe, and let your worship be such as he appoints. Of old, worship was cumbered with ceremonial, and men gathered around one dedicated building, whose solemn pomp was emblematic of "*the beauty of holiness*;" but now our worship is spiritual, and the architecture of the house and the garments of the worshippers are matters of no importance; the spiritual beauty of inward purity and outward holiness being far more precious in the eyes of our thrice holy God. O for grace ever to worship with holy motives and in a holy manner, as becometh saints! The call to worship in these two verses chimes in with the loud pealing thunder, which is the church bell of the universe ringing kings and angels, and all the sons of earth to their devotions.

3 The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters.

4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of *his* glory.

10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

3. "*The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.*" The thunder is not only poetically but instructively called "the voice of God," since it peals from on high; it surpasses all other sounds, it inspires awe, it is entirely independent of man, and has been used on some occasions as the grand accompaniment of God's speech to Adam's sons. There is peculiar terror in a tempest at sea, when deep calleth unto deep, and the raging sea echoes to the angry sky. No sight more alarming than the flash of lightning around the mast of the ship; and no sound more calculated to inspire a reverent awe than the roar of the storm. The children of heaven have often enjoyed the tumult with humble joy peculiar to the saints, and even those who know not God have been forced into unwilling reverence while the storm has lasted. "*The glory of God thundereth.*" Thunder is in truth no mere electric phenomenon, but is caused by the interposition of God himself. Even the old heathen spake of Jupiter Tonans; but our modern wise men will have us believe in laws and forces, and anything or nothing so that they may be rid of God. Electricity of itself can do nothing, it must be called and sent upon its errand; and until the almighty Lord commissions it, its bolt of fire is inert and powerless. As well might a rock of granite, or a bar of iron fly in the midst of heaven, as the lightning go without being sent by the great First Cause. "*The Lord is upon many waters.*" Still the Psalmist's ear hears no voice but that of Jehovah, resounding from the multitudinous and dark waters of the upper ocean of clouds, and echoing from the innumerable billows of the storm-tossed sea below. The waters above and beneath the firmament are astonished at the eternal voice. When the Holy

Spirit makes the divine promise to be heard above the many waters of our soul's trouble, then is God as glorious in the spiritual world as in the universe of matter. Above us and beneath us all is the peace of God when he gives us quiet.

4. "*The voice of the Lord is powerful.*" An irresistible power attends the lightning of which the thunder is the report. In an instant, when the Lord wills it, the force of electricity produces amazing results. A writer upon this subject, speaks of these results as including a light of the intensity of the sun in his strength, a heat capable of fusing the compactest metals, a force in a moment paralysing the muscles of the most powerful animals; a power suspending the all-pervading gravity of the earth, and an energy capable of decomposing and recomposing the closest affinities of the most intimate combinations. Well does Thompson speak of "the unconquerable lightning," for it is the chief of the ways of God in physical forces, and none can measure its power.

As the voice of God in nature is so powerful, so is it in grace; the reader will do well to draw a parallel, and he will find much in the gospel which may be illustrated by the thunder of the Lord in the tempest. His voice, whether in nature or revelation, shakes both earth and heaven; see that ye refuse not him that speaketh. If his voice be thus mighty, what must his hand be! beware lest ye provoke a blow. "*The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.*" The King of kings speaks like a king. As when a lion roareth, all the beasts of the forest are still, so is the earth hushed and mute while Jehovah thundereth marvellously.

> "'Tis listening fear and dumb amazement all."

As for the written word of God, its majesty is apparent both in its style, its matter, and its power over the human mind; blessed be God, it is the majesty of mercy wielding a silver sceptre; of such majesty the word of our salvation is *full* to overflowing.

5. "*The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.*"

> "Black from the stroke above, the smouldering pine
> Stands a sad shatter'd trunk."

Noble trees fall prostrate beneath the mysterious bolt, or stand in desolation as mementoes of its power. Lebanon itself is not secure, high as it stands, and ancient as are its venerable woods: "*Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.*" The greatest and most venerable of trees or men, may not reckon upon immunity when the Lord is abroad in his wrath. The gospel of Jesus has a like dominion over the most inaccessible of mortals; and when the Lord sends the word, it breaks hearts far stouter than the cedars.

6. "*He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.*" Not only the trees, but the mountains themselves move as though they frisked and leaped like young bulls or antelopes. As our own poets would mention hills and valleys known to them, so the Psalmist hears the crash and roar among the ranges of Libanus, and depicts the tumult in graphic terms. Thus sings one of our own countrymen:—

> "Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud
> The repercussive roar: with mighty crash
> Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks
> Of Penmaen Mawr, heap'd hideous to the sky,
> Tumble the smitten cliffs; and Snowdon's peak,
> Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.
> Far seen, the heights of heathy Cheviot blaze,
> And Thulè bellows through her utmost isles."

The glorious gospel of the blessed God has more than equal power over the rocky obduracy and mountainous pride of man. The voice of our dying Lord rent the rocks and opened the graves: his living voice still works the like wonders. Glory be to his name, the hills of our sins leap into his grave,

and are buried in the red sea of his blood, when the voice of his intercession is heard.

7. "*The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.*" As when sparks fly from the anvil by blows of a ponderous hammer, so the lightning attends the thundering strokes of Jehovah.

> "At first heard solemn o'er the verge of heaven,
> The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
> And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
> The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
> The noise astounds: till overhead a sheet
> Of livid flame discloses wide; then shuts
> And opens wider; shuts and opens still
> Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze."

The thunder seems to divide one flash from another, interposing its deepening roar between the flash which precedes it and the next. That the flashes are truly flames of fire is witnessed by their frequently falling upon houses, churches, etc., and wrapping them in a blaze. How easily could the Lord destroy his rebellious creatures with his hot thunderbolts! how gracious is the hand which spares such great offenders, when to crush them would be so easy!

Flames of fire attend the voice of God in the gospel, illuminating and melting the hearts of men: by these he consumes our lusts and kindles in us a holy flame of ever-aspiring love and holiness. Pentecost is a suggestive commentary upon this verse.

8. As the storm travelled, it burst over the desert. "*The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.*" God courts not the applause of men—his grandest deeds are wrought where man's inquisitive glance is all unknown. Where no sound of man was heard, the voice of God was terribly distinct. The vast and silent plains trembled with affright. Silence did homage to the Almighty voice. Low lying plains must hear the voice of God as well as lofty mountains; the poor as well as the mighty must acknowledge the glory of the Lord. Solitary and barren places are to be gladdened by the gospel's heavenly sound. What a shaking and overturning power there is in the word of God! even the conservative desert quivers into progress when God decrees it.

9. "*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,*" those timid creatures, in deadly fear of the tempest, drop their burdens in an untimely manner. Perhaps a better reading is, "the oaks to tremble," especially as this agrees with the next sentence, *and* "*discovereth the forests.*" The dense shades of the forest are lit up with the lurid glare of the lightning, and even the darkest recesses are for a moment laid bare.

> "The gloomy woods
> Start at the flash, and from their deep recess
> Wide-flaming out, their trembling inmates shake."

Our first parents sought a refuge among the trees, but the voice of the Lord soon found them out, and made their hearts to tremble. There is no concealment from the fire-glance of the Almighty—one flash of his angry eye turns midnight into noon. The gospel has a like revealing power in dark hearts, in a moment it lights up every dark recess of the heart's ungodliness, and bids the soul tremble before the Lord.

"*In his temple doth every one speak of his glory.*" Those who were worshipping in the temple, were led to speak of the greatness of Jehovah as they heard the repeated thunder-claps. The whole world is also a temple for God, and when he rides abroad upon the wings of the wind, all things are vocal in his praise. We too, the redeemed of the Lord, who are living temples for his Spirit, as we see the wonders of his power in creation, and feel them in grace, unite to magnify his name. No tongue may be dumb in God's temple when

his glory is the theme. The original appears to have the force of "every one crieth Glory," as though all things were moved by a sense of God's majesty to shout in ecstasy, "Glory, glory." Here is a good precedent for our Methodist friends and for the Gogoniants of the zealous Welsh.

10. "*The Lord sitteth upon the flood.*" Flood follows tempest, but Jehovah is ready for the emergency. No deluge can undermine the foundation of his throne. He is calm and unmoved, however much the deep may roar and be troubled: his government rules the most unstable and boisterous of created things. Far out on the wild waste of waters, Jehovah "plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm," "*Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.*" Jesus has the government upon his shoulders eternally: our interests in the most stormy times are safe in his hands. Satan is not king, but Jehovah Jesus is; therefore let us worship him, and rejoice evermore.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

Power was displayed in the hurricane whose course this Psalm so grandly pictures; and now, in the cool calm after the storm, that power is promised to be the strength of the chosen. He who wings the unerring bolt, will give to his redeemed the wings of eagles; he who shakes the earth with his voice, will terrify the enemies of his saints, and give his children peace. Why are we weak when we have divine strength to flee to? Why are we troubled when the Lord's own peace is ours? Jesus the mighty God is our peace—what a blessing is this to-day! What a blessing it will be to us in that day of the Lord which will be in darkness and not light to the ungodly!

Dear reader, is not this a noble Psalm to be sung in stormy weather? Can you sing amid the thunder? Will you be able to sing when the last thunders are let loose, and Jesus judges quick and dead? If you are a believer, the last verse is your heritage, and surely that will set you singing.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—In this Psalm, the strength of Jehovah is celebrated; and the exemplification of it is evidently taken from a thunder-storm in Lebanon. The Psalm seems to be addressed to the angels. See Psalm lxxxix. 7. It thus begins:—

> "Render unto Jehovah, ye sons of the mighty,
> Render unto Jehovah glory and strength;
> Render to Jehovah the glory of his name;
> Bow down to Jehovah in the majesty of holiness!"

Immediately follows the description of the thunder-storm, in which it does not seem fanciful to observe the historical progression which is usual on such occasions. The first lines seem to describe only the noise of the thunder, the description growing more intense as the rumbling draws nearer.

> "The voice of Jehovah is above the waters;
> The God of glory thundereth,
> Jehovah is louder than many waters,
> The voice of Jehovah in strength,
> The voice of Jehovah in majesty!"

But now the effects become visible; the storm has descended on the mountains and forests:—

> "The voice of Jehovah shivers the cedars,
> Even shivers Jehovah the cedars of Lebanon;
> And makes them to skip, like a calf;
> Lebanon and Sirion, like a young buffalo,
> The voice of Jehovah forketh the lightning's flash!"

From the mountains the storm sweeps down into the plains, where, however, its effects are not so fearful as on the mountains—

"The voice of Jehovah causeth the desert to tremble—
The voice of Jehovah causeth to tremble the desert of Kadesh—
The voice of Jehovah causeth the oaks to tremble,
And lays bare the forests!
Therefore, in his temple every one speaks of his glory."

The description of the swollen torrents closes the scene—

"Jehovah upon the rain-torrent sitteth.
Yea, sitteth Jehovah a king for ever."

And the moral or application of the whole is—

"Jehovah to his people will give strength,
Jehovah will bless his people with peace."

Robert Murray M'Cheyne, 1813—1843.

Whole Psalm.—There is no phenomenon in nature so awful as a thunder-storm, and almost every poet from Homer and Virgil down to Dante and Milton, or rather down to Grahame and Pollok, has described it. In the Bible, too, we have a thunder-storm, the twenty-ninth Psalm—the description of a tempest, which, rising from the Mediterranean, and travelling by Lebanon and along the inland mountains, reaches Jerusalem, and sends the people into the temple-porticoes for refuge; and, besides those touches of terror in which the geographical progress of the tornado is described, it derives a sacred vitality and power from the presence of Jehovah in each successive peal.—*James Hamilton, D.D., in "The Literary Attractions of the Bible,"* 1849.

Whole Psalm.—A glorious Psalm of praise sung during a tempest, the majesty of which shakes universal nature, so much so that the greatness of the power of the Lord is felt by all in heaven and on earth. This Lord is the God of his people, who blesses them with strength and peace. To rightly appreciate the feelings of the bard, one ought to realise an Oriental storm, especially in the mountainous regions of Palestine, which, accompanied by the terrific echoes of the encircling mountains, by torrents of rain-like waterspouts, often scatters terror on man and beast, destruction on cities and fields. Wilson, the traveller, describes such a tempest in the neighbourhood of Baalbek: "I was overtaken by a storm, as if the floodgates of heaven had burst; it came on in a moment, and raged with a power which suggested the end of the world. Solemn darkness covered the earth: the rain descended in torrents, and sweeping down the mountain side, became by the fearful power of the storm transmuted into thick clouds of fog." Compare also our Lord's parable, taken from life, in Matt. vii. 27.—*Augustus F. Tholuck, in loc.*

Verse 1.—"*Give unto the Lord.*" *Give, give, give.* This showeth how unwilling such are usually to give God his right, or to suffer a word of exhortation to this purpose.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*O ye mighty.*" The Septuagint renders it, *O ye sons of rams!* These bell-wethers should not cast their noses into the air, and carry their crest the higher, because the shepherd hath bestowed a bell upon them, more than upon the rest of the flock.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 1, 2.—There are three *gives* in these two verses:—"*Give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name.*" Glory is God's right, and he stands upon his right; and this the sincere Christian knows, and therefore he gives him his right, he gives him the honour and the glory that is due unto his name. But pray do not mistake me. I do not say that such as are really sincere do actually eye the glory of Christ in all their actions. Oh, no! This is a happiness desirable on earth, but shall never be attained till we come to heaven. Bye and base ends and aims will be still ready to creep into the best hearts, but all sincere hearts sigh and groan under them. They complain to God of them, and they cry out for justice, justice upon them; and

it is the earnest desire and daily endeavours of their souls to be rid of them; and therefore they shall not be imputed to them, nor keep good things from them. But now take a sincere Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course, and you shall find that his aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings are to glorify God, to exalt God, and to lift up God in the world. If the hypocrite did in good earnest aim at the glory of God in what he does, then the glory of God would swallow up his bye-aims and carnal ends, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods. Exod. vii. 10—12. Look, as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God, where it is aimed at, will put out and consume all bye and base ends. This is most certain, that which is a man's great end, that will work out all other ends. He that sets up the glory of God as his chief end, will find that his chief end will by degrees eat out all low and base ends. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat (Gen. xli. 4), so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends that crowd in upon the soul in religious work. Where the glory of God is kept up as a man's greatest end, there all bye and base ends will be kept at an under.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 2.—"*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.*" Which yet you cannot do, for his name is above all praise (Psalm cxlviii. 13); but you must aim at it. The Rabbins observe that God's holy name is mentioned eighteen several times in this Psalm; that great men especially may give him the honour of his name, that they may stand in awe and not sin, that they may bring presents to him who ought to be feared, and those also the very best of the best, since he is a great king, and standeth much upon his seniority. Mal. i. 14.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 2.—"*Worship the Lord.*" If any should ask, Why is the Lord to be worshipped? Why must he have such high honours from those that are high? What doth he in the world that calls for such adoration? David answereth meteorologically as well as theologically, he answers from the clouds (verses 3, 4), "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty;" as if he had said, Although the Lord Jesus Christ will not set up an outward, pompous, political kingdom, such as that of Cyrus, Alexander, etc., yet by the ministry of the gospel he will erect a spiritual kingdom, and gather to himself a church that shall abide for ever, out of all the nations of the earth; for the gospel shall be carried and preached, to not only the people of Israel, the Jews, but to the Gentiles, all the world over, that the minds of men may be enlightened, awakened, and moved with that unheard of doctrine of salvation by Christ, which had been hid from ages and generations. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3.—"*The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.*" Yes, great God, these torrents of tears which flow down from my eyes announce thy divine presence in my soul. This heart hitherto so dry, so arid, so hard; this rock which thou hast struck a second time, will not resist thee any longer, for out of it there now gushes healthful waters in abundance. The selfsame voice of God which overturns the mountains, thunders, lightens, and divides the heaven above the sinner, now commands the clouds to pour forth showers of blessings, changing the desert of his soul into a field producing a hundredfold; that voice I hear.—*J. B. Massillon.*

Verses 3—10.—"*The Lord,*" etc. All things which we commonly say are the effects of the natural powers of matter and laws of motion, are, indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly), the effects of God's acting upon matter continually and at every moment, either immediately by himself, or mediately by some created intelligent being. Consequently there is no such thing as the cause of nature, or the power of nature.—*Samuel Clarke,** 1675—1729.

* "The friend and disciple of Newton."

Verses 3—10.

The voice of the Lord on the ocean is known,
The God of eternity thundereth abroad;
The voice of the Lord from the depth of his throne
Is terror and power;—all nature is awed.

The voice of the Lord through the calm of the wood
Awakens its echoes, strikes light through its caves;
The Lord sitteth King on the turbulent flood,
The winds are his servants, his servants the waves.

James Montgomery, 1771—1854.

Verses 3—11:—

Messiah's voice is in the cloud,
The God of glory thunders loud.
Messiah rides along the floods,
He treads upon the flying clouds.
Messiah's voice is full of power,
His lightnings play when tempests lower.
Messiah's voice the cedars breaks,
While Lebanon's foundation quakes.
Messiah's voice removes the hills,
And all the plains with rivers fills.
The voice of their expiring God,
Shall make the rocks to start abroad;
Mount Zion and Mount Sirion,
Shall bound along with Lebanon:
The flames of fire shall round him wreathe,
When he shall on the ether breathe.
Messiah's voice shall shake the earth,
And, lo! the graves shall groan in birth,
Ten thousand thousand living sons
Shall be the issue of their groans.
The peace of God, the gospel sounds;
The peace of God, the earth rebounds,
The gospel everlasting shines
A light from God that ne'er declines.
This is the light Jehovah sends,
To bless the world's remotest ends.

Barclay's Paraphrase.

Verse 4.—"*The voice of the Lord.*" These vehement repetitions resemble a series of thunder-claps; one seems to hear the dread artillery of heaven firing volley after volley, while peal on peal the echo follows the sound.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 4.—"*The voice of the Lord is powerful.*" I would render unto God the glory due unto his name, for the admirable change which he has wrought in my heart. There was nothing to be found in me but an impious hardness and inveterate disorder. From this helpless state he changed me into a new man and made resplendent the glory of his name and the power of his grace. He alone can work such prodigies. Unbelievers who refuse to acknowledge the hand of God in creation must surely in this case admit, that "this is the finger of God." Yes, great God, chaos knows not how to resist thee, it hears thy voice obediently, but the obdurate heart repels thee, and thy mighty voice too often calls to it in vain. Thou art not so great and wonderful in creating worlds out of nothing as thou art when thou dost command a rebel heart to arise from its abyss of sin, and to run in the ways of thy commandments. To disperse a chaos of crime and ignorance by the majesty of thy word, to shed light on the direst darkness, and by the Holy Ghost to establish harmonious order where all was confusion, manifests in far greater measure thine omnipotence than the calling forth of heavenly laws and celestial suns from the first chaos.—*J. B. Massillon.*

Verse 4.—O may the evangelical "Boanerges" so cause the glorious sound of the gospel to be heard under the whole heaven, that the world may again be made sensible thereof; before that voice of the Son of Man, which hath so often called sinners to repentance, shall call them to judgment.—*George Horne.*

Verse 4.—Where the word of a king is, there is power, but what imperial voice shall be likened unto the majestic thunder of the Lord?—*C. H. S.*

Verse 5.—"*The voice of Jehovah.*" Philosophers think not that they have reasoned skilfully enough about inferior causes, unless they separate God very far from his works. It is a diabolical science, however, which fixes our contemplations on the works of nature, and turns them away from God. If any one who wished to know a man, should take no notice of his face, but should fix his eyes only on the points of his nails, his folly might justly be derided. But far greater is the folly of those philosophers, who, out of mediate and proximate causes, weave themselves vails lest they should be compelled to acknowledge the hand of God, which manifestly displays itself in his works.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—"*The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars,*" etc. Like as tempests when they arise, and lightning, quickly and in a trice, hurl down and overturn mountains and the highest trees; even so doth the Lord bring down with a break-neck fall, the proud, haughty, arrogant, and insolent, who set themselves against God, and seek the spoil of those that be quiet and godly.—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 5.—"*The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.*" The ancient expositors remind us that the *breaking* of the *cedar trees* by the wind, is a figure of the laying low of the lofty and proud things of this world, by the rushing mighty wind of the Holy Spirit, given on that day. *Confringit cedros Deus, hoc est humiliat superbos.* (S. Jerome, and so S. Basil.)—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5.—"*The Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.*"—What a shame is it then that our hard hearts break not, yield not, though thunder-struck with the dreadful menaces of God's mouth!—*John Trapp.*

Verse 5.—"*Breaketh the cedars of Lebanon:*"—

> When high in air the pine ascends,
> To every ruder blast it bends.
> The palace falls with heavier weight,
> When tumbling from its airy height;
> And when from heaven the lightning flies,
> It blasts the hills that proudest rise.

Horace, translated by Philip Francis, D.D., 1765.

Verse 5.—"*The cedars of Lebanon.*" These mighty trees of God, which for ages have stood the force of the tempest, rearing their ever-green colossal boughs in the region of everlasting snow, are the first objects of the fury of the lightning, which is well known to visit first the highest objects.—*Robert Murray M'Cheyne.*

Verse 6.—"*He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn;*" that is, the Lord by his thundering, powerful voice, first, will make them skip, as frighted with fear; and secondly, as revived with joy. Yet more (verse 7), "*The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire;*" that is, will send and divide to every one as they need (1 Cor. xii. 11), the Holy Spirit, who is compared to and called *fire* (Matt. iii. 11), and who came as with a thunder-storm *of a rushing mighty wind*, and with the appearance of *cloven tongues, like as of fire*, and sat upon each one of the apostles. Acts ii. 2, 3. Nor did this voice of thunder, accompanied with divided flames of fire reach Jerusalem only; for, as it follows (verse 8), "*The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh;*" that is, the Lord by the voice of the gospel shall go forth with power to those Gentiles, who are like a wilderness, barren of goodness, and unmanured in spirituals, though they dwell in well-governed cities, and are well furnished with morals. It shall go forth also to those Gentiles who inhabit waste wildernesses, and are not so much as reduced to civility. These wildernesses, the thundering voice of the Lord hath shaken heretofore, and doth shake at this day, and will yet further shake, that the fulness of the Gentiles may come in. Many of these wildernesses hath

the Lord turned into fruitful fields, and pleasant lands, by the voice of the gospel sounding among them. For in these wildernesses (as it followeth, verse 9), "*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve;*" that is, they that were as wild, as untaught, and untamed as the *hind*, or any beast in the forest, he brings to the sorrows of their new birth, to repentance and gospel humiliation, and in doing this, "*he* (as the psalmist goes on), *discovereth the forests;*" that is, opens the hearts of men, which are as thick set and full grown with vanity, pride, hypocrisy, self-love, and self-sufficiency, as also with wantonness and sensuality, as any forest is overgrown with thickets of trees and bushes, which deny all passage through, till cleared away with burning down or cutting up. Such an opening, such a discovery, doth the Lord make in the forests of men's hearts, by the sword and fire, that is, by the word and spirit of the gospel; and when all this is done, the forest becomes a *temple*, and as that verse concludes, "*In his temple doth every one speak of his glory.*" And if the *floods* of ungodliness rise up against this people, whom the thunder and lightning of the gospel have subdued to Christ, and framed into a holy temple, then the psalmist assureth us (verse 10), "*The Lord sitteth upon the flood,*" that is, 'tis under his power, he ruleth and overruleth it; "*Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever;*" and (verse 11), "*The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.*" Thus, the Lord "thundereth marvellously" (Job xxxvii. 5), and these are glorious marvels which he thundereth; he converts sinners.

Thus, though I like not their way who are given to allegorise the Scriptures, yet I doubt not but we may make a profitable use of this and many other Scriptures by way of allegory. This being an undeniable truth, which is the ground of it—that the Lord puts forth, as it were, the power of thunder and lightning in the preaching of his Word, these two things are to be marked.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 6.—"*He maketh them also to skip like a calf.*" That is to say, he hath made the splinters and broken pieces of trees that have been struck with lightning, to fly up into the air, or when they have been shaken by the wind, storms, or by earthquakes.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 6.—The original is—

"And makes them skip like a calf,
Lebanon and Sirion, like a young buffalo."

At first sight it might appear that the cedars were still meant, and that Lebanon and Sirion were used by metonymy for the cedars which grew upon them. But, 1. We never hear of cedars growing upon Sirion, or Shenir, or Hermon, for it has all these names; and, 2. There is a parallel passage where this interpretation will hardly answer in Psalm cxiv. Describing the exodus of Israel, it says—

"The mountains skipped like rams,
And the little hills like lambs."

The same verb occurs here, the verb which means "to skip, to dance," used in Nahum iii. 2, to signify the jolting of chariots, and also in Joel ii. 5. In both these instances, rough motion, accompanied with noise, seems intended. Now, though this may very well be understood as a highly figurative description, as it undoubtedly is, of the usual effect of a thunder-storm; yet it is interesting to compare it with the following passage of Volney, which describes certain phenomena as frequent in Mount Lebanon, which may give a new meaning to the "*skipping of the mountains:*"—

"When the traveller," says he, "penetrates the interior of these mountains, the ruggedness of the roads, the steepness of the declivities, the depth of the precipices, have at first a terrific effect; but the sagacity of the mules which bear him soon inspires him with confidence, and enables him to examine at his ease the picturesque scenes which succeed one another, so as almost to bewilder him. There, as in the Alps, he sometimes travels whole days to arrive at a spot which was in sight when he set out. He turns, he descends, he winds round, he

climbs ; and under the perpetual change of position, one is ready to think that a magical power is varying at every step the beauties of the landscapes. Sometimes villages are seen, ready as it were to slide down the deep declivities, and so disposed that the roofs of the one row of houses serve as a street to the row above. At another time, you see a convent seated on an isolated cone, like Marshaia in the valley of Tigré. Here a rock is pierced by a torrent, forming a natural cascade, as at *Nahr-el-Leban ;* there another rock assumes the appearance of a natural wall ! Often on the sides, ledges of stones, washed down and left by the waters, resemble ruins disposed by art. In some places, the waters meeting with inclined beds, have undermined the intermediate earth, and have formed caverns, as at Nahr-el-Kelb, near Antoura. In other places, they have worn for themselves subterranean channels, through which flow little rivulets during part of the year, as at Mar Hama. Sometimes these picturesque circumstances have become tragical ones. Rocks loosened or thrown off their equilibrium by thaw or earthquake, have been known to precipitate themselves on the adjacent dwellings, and crush the inhabitants. An accident of this kind, about twenty years ago, buried a whole village near Mar Djordos, so as to leave no trace of its existence. More recently, and near the same spot, the soil of a hill planted with mulberry trees and vines detached itself by a sudden thaw, and, sliding over the surface of the rock which it had covered, like a vessel launched from the stocks, established itself entire in the valley below."—*Robert Murray M' Cheyne.*

Verse 7.—"*The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.*" By the power of God, the "*flames of fire*" are "*divided*" and sent abroad from the clouds upon the earth, in the terrible form of lightning, that sharp and glittering sword of the Almighty, which no substance can withstand. The same power of God goeth forth by his word, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," penetrating, melting, enlightening, and inflaming the hearts of men. Acts ii. 3, Heb. iv. 12.—*George Horne.*

Verse 7.—"*The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.*" The voice of the Lord is here said to *divide the flames ;* literally, *to hew out flames*, λατομεῖν φλόγας. The *Sept.* has διακόπτει φλόγα πυρός. In the words of Gesenius, "The voice of Jehovah *cutteth out flames* of fire, *i.e.*, "sendeth out divided flames of fire." This is (as Theodoret has observed) very descriptive of the divine action at Pentecost, sending forth *divided flames*, like "*tela trisulca,*" in the tongues of fire which were divided off from one heavenly source or fountain of flame, and sat upon the heads of the apostles, and which filled them with the fire of holy zeal and love.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 7.—"*Divideth the flames of fire.*" Marg., *cutteth out.* The Hebrew word חָצַב *khatzab* means properly *to cut, to hew, to hew out ;* as for example, stones. The allusion here is undoubtedly to lightning ; and the image is either that it seems to be cut out, or cut into tongues and streaks—or, more probably, that the *clouds* seem to be cut or hewed, so as to make openings or paths for the lightning. The eye is evidently fixed on the clouds, and on the sudden flash of lightning, as if the clouds had been *cleaved* or *opened* for the passage of it. The idea of the psalmist is, that the "*voice of the Lord,*" or the thunder, seems to cleave or open the clouds for the flames of fire to play amidst the tempest.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 8.—"*The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.*" That Kadesh-Naphtali is meant, the geographical position of Lebanon would make us believe, though this is not necessary. And, although Syria is much exposed to earthquakes—as, for example, that of Aleppo, in 1822, which was sensibly felt at Damascus—yet it does not seem necessary to imagine anything farther than the usual effects of a thunder-storm. The *oaks and forests* of verse 9, suit well with the description given of the lower limbs of Lebanon, which abound in "thickets of myrtle, woods of fir, walnut trees, carob trees, and Turkish oaks."

And the *rain-torrent* of verse 10 is admirably descriptive of the sudden swell of the thousand streams which flow from Lebanon. According to modern travellers, the number of water-courses descending from Lebanon is immense; and the suddenness of the rise of these streams may be gathered from the contradictions in their accounts. The Nahr-el-Sazib is described by one as "a rivulet, though crossed by a bridge of six arches;" by another it is called "a large river." The Damour (the ancient Tamyras), which flows immediately from Lebanon, is "a river," says Mandrell, "apt to swell much upon sudden rains; in which case, precipitating itself from the mountains with great rapidity, it has been fatal to many a passenger." He mentions a French gentleman, M. Spon, who, a few years before, in attempting to ford it, was hurried down by the stream, and perished in the sea. This is one instance of very many in the mountains of Lebanon, where the brook, which is usually nearly dry, becomes all at once an impassable torrent. When Volney looked upon the rivers of Syria in summer, he doubted whether they could be called rivers. But had he ventured to cross them after a thunder-storm, his scepticism would no longer have had room or time to exercise itself, and he would have felt the propriety of the psalmist's painting, where he says—

"Jehovah sitteth on the rain-torrents,
Jehovah sitteth a King for ever."

Robert Murray M'Cheyne.

Verse 8.—"*The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness.*" Great God, I have laboured to escape thee! I sought refuge for my remorse in a retreat where nothing might recall me to my God. Far away from the succours of religion, remote from all the channels which bring to me the waters of grace, apart from all whose reproving witness might restrain me from iniquity; yet even there, Great God, where I believed that I had found an asylum inaccessible to thine eternal mercy, wherein I could sin with impunity, even there, in that wilderness, thy voice arrested me and laid me at thy feet.—*J. B. Massillon.*

Verse 9.—"*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.*" With respect to the sense conveyed by the common reading, it may be observed, that hinds bring forth their young with great difficulty and pain, "bowing themselves, bruising their young ones, and casting out their sorrows" (Job xxxix. 4, 6); and it therefore heightens the description given of the terrific character of the thunder-storm, when the thunder which is here called "the voice of God," is represented as causing, through the terror which it inspires, the hinds in their pregnant state prematurely to drop their young; although, according to our ideas of poetical imagery, this may not accord so well with the other images in the passage, nor appear so beautiful and sublime as the image of the oaks trembling at the voice of Jehovah.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—"*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.*" The care and tenderness of God towards beasts turns to his praise, as well as the care which he hath of, and the tenderness which he shows to believers. As it doth exceedingly advance the glory of God, that he takes care of wild beasts, so it may exceedingly strengthen the faith of man that he will take care of him. Doth the Lord take care of *hinds?* then certainly he takes care of those that particularly belong to him. There is a special providence of God towards these and such like creatures for the production of their young. He—if I may so speak with reverence—shows his midwifery in helping these savage beasts when their pains come upon them. As the Lord takes man, in an eminent manner, "out of the womb" (Psalm xxii. 9), so in a manner he takes beasts out of the womb too. "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness: the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh;" so we translate it; but the word which we render "*shaketh*" is the same with that in Job xxxix. 2, which signifieth *to bring forth;* and hence, some very learned in the Hebrew tongue do not render as we, "The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness," but "The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness *to bring forth;* the Lord maketh the wilderness

of Kadesh *to bring forth;*" which is not to be understood of the vegetative creatures (that's a truth, the Lord makes the trees of the forest to bring forth both leaves and fruit), but it is meant of animals or living creatures there. And then when he saith, "The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness to bring forth," the meaning is, the Lord makes the wild beast of the wilderness to bring forth; which seems to be the clear sense of the place by that which followeth; for the psalmist having said this in general at the eighth verse, "*The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness to bring forth,*" he in the ninth verse gives the special instance of the *hind:* "*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—"*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.*" It is with great propriety, says one of the ancients, that Jehovah demands, "The birth of the hinds dost thou guard"? (Job xxxix. 1), for since this animal is always in flight, and with fear and terror always leaping and skipping about, she could never bring her young to maturity without such a special protection. The providence of God, therefore, is equally conspicuous in the preservation of the mother and the fawn; both are the objects of his compassion and tender care; and, consequently, that afflicted man has no reason to charge his Maker with unkindness, who condescends to watch over the goats and the hinds. It seems to be generally admitted, that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty; and so much appears to be suggested in the verse, "They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows." But if Pliny, and other naturalists are worthy of credit, divine providence has been graciously pleased to provide certain herbs, which greatly facilitate the birth: and by instinct, he directs the hind to feed upon them, when the time of gestation draws towards a close. Whatever truth there may be in this assertion, we know from higher authority, that providence promotes the parturition of the hind, by awakening her fears, and agitating her frame by the rolling thunder:—"*The voice of Jehovah* (a common Hebrew phrase, denoting thunder) *maketh the hinds to calve.*" Nor ought we to wonder, that so timorous a creature as the hind, should be so much affected by that awful atmospheric convulsion, when some of the proudest men that ever existed, have been known to tremble. Augustus, the Roman emperor, according to Suetonius, was so terrified when it thundered, that he wrapped a seal-skin round his body, with the view of defending it from the lightning, and concealed himself in some secret corner till the tempest ceased. The tyrant Caligula, who sometimes affected to threaten Jupiter himself, covered his head, or hid himself under a bed; and Horace confesses he was reclaimed from atheism by the terror of thunder and lightning, the effects of which he describes with his usual felicity. (Odes, b. i. 34.)—*George Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture."*

Verse 9.—"*The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.*" "*Cervi sunt predicatores,*" says S. Jerome, who bring forth souls to Christ by the gospel which is God's *voice;* and the stripping of the leaves of the forest by the voice of the Lord, represents their work in humbling the strong oaks and lofty cedars of the world by the power of the gospel, and in stripping the souls of the worldly-minded of their manifold disguises (S. Basil). Others apply it to the act of the preachers of God's word, disclosing the dark thickets of divine mysteries in the holy Scriptures by evangelical light set forth by the Holy Ghost (S. Jerome).—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—"*The voice of Jehovah makes havoc of the oaks, and strippeth bare the forests.*"—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 9.—"*In his temple.*"—Some conceive that this Psalm was appointed by David to be sung in the temple in time of thunder, which is not unlikely. There are writers who make God to be the nominative case to the verb speaketh; and render it thus, *in his temple doth he utter all his glory.* As much as to say, much of his glory God uttereth in his thunder, but all in his temple, for whatsoever there he speaketh with his mouth he fulfilleth it with his hand. *John Trapp.*

Verse 9 (*last clause*).—David speaking in the former part of the Psalm of the effects of natural thunder only, towards the close of the Psalm applieth it to the Word of God, while he saith, "*And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory;*" that is, the word and ordinances of God, ministered in his church or temple, will put every one to acknowledge and speak of the glorious power of God, even much more than the mighty thunder which soundeth in our ears, or the subtle lightning which flasheth in our eyes. There is far more royal power in the thunder of the Word, than in the word of thunder. This terrifieth only to conviction, but that terrifieth to salvation; for after God speaks terror there in his threatenings, he speaks comfort in the promises; and when he hath affrighted us with a sense of our sins and of his wrath due to us for our sins, as with an horrible tempest, he presently refresheth us with the gentle gales of revealed grace, and with the pleasant amiable sunshine of his favour by Jesus Christ.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 11.—"*The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace;*" *i.e.*, he is in war their strength, and their felicity in peace; in war he is the Author of all that power wherewith they are enabled to oppose and overcome potent enemies; and in peace, he is their truly felicitating good, and makes them, by his own vouchsafed presence, a truly blessed people.—*John Howe.*

Verse 11.—"*The Lord will bless his people with peace.*" Though some precious souls that have closed with Christ, and embraced the gospel, be not at present brought to rest in their own consciences, but continue for awhile under some dissatisfaction and trouble in their own spirits, yet even then they have *peace* of conscience in a threefold respect; *in pretio, in promisso, in semine.* First, every true believer hath peace of conscience *in pretio;* the gospel puts that price into his hand, which will assuredly purchase it, and that is the blood of Christ. We say that is gold which is worth gold, which we may anywhere exchange for gold; such is the blood of Christ; it is peace of conscience, because the soul that hath this may exchange it for this. God himself cannot deny the poor creature that prays on these terms: Lord, give me peace of conscience; here is Christ's blood, the price of it. That which could pay the debt, surely can procure the receipt. Peace of conscience is but a discharge under God's hand, that the debt due to divine justice is fully paid. The blood of Christ hath done that the greater for the believer, it shall therefore do this the less. If there were such a rare potion that did infallibly procure health to every one that takes it, we might safely say, as soon as the sick man hath drunk it down, that he hath drunk his health, it is in him, though at present he doth not feel himself to have it: in time it will appear. Secondly, *In promisso.* Every true believer hath peace of conscience in the promise, and that we count as good as ready money in the purse, which we have sure bond for. "*The Lord will bless his people with peace.*" He is resolved on it, and then who shall hinder it? It is worth your reading the whole Psalm, to see what weight the Lord gives to this sweet promise, for the encouragement of our faith in expecting the performance thereof. Nothing more hard to enter into the heart of a poor creature (when all is in an uproar in his bosom, and his conscience threatening nothing but fire and sword, wrath, vengeance, from God for his sins), than thoughts or hopes of peace and comfort. Now the psalm is spent in showing what great things God can do, and that with no more trouble to himself than a word speaking, "*The voice of the Lord is full of majesty*" (verse 4), "It breaks the cedars, it divides the flames, it shakes the wilderness, it makes the hinds to calve." This God that doth all this, promiseth *to bless his people with peace,* outward and inward; for without this inward peace, though he might give them peace, yet could he never bless them with peace as he there undertakes. A sad peace, were it not, to have quiet streets, but cutting of throats in our houses? yet infinitely more sad to have peace both in our streets and houses, but war and blood in our guilty consciences. What peace can a poor creature taste or

relish, while the sword of God's wrath lies at the throat of conscience? not peace with God himself. Therefore Christ purchased peace of pardon, to obtain peace of conscience for his pardoned ones, and accordingly hath bequeathed it in the promise to them, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." John xiv. 27. Where you see he is both the testator to leave, and the executor of his own will, to give out with his own hands what his love hath left believers; so that there is no fear but his will shall be performed to the full, seeing himself lives to see it done. Thirdly, *In semine.* Every believer hath this inward peace in the seed. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Psalm xcvii. 11. Where sown, but in the believer's own bosom, when principles of grace and holiness were cast into it by the Spirit of God? Hence it is called "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Heb. xii. 11. It shoots as naturally from holiness, as any fruit in its kind doth from the seed proper to it. It is, indeed, most true, that the seed runs and ripens into this fruit sooner in some than it doth in others. This spiritual harvest comes not alike soon to all, no more than the other that is outward doth; but here is the comfort—whoever hath a seed-time of grace pass over his soul, shall have his harvest-time also of joy.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 11.—"*Peace.*" There is a threefold "peace," *externa, interna, æterna;* temporal, spiritual, celestial peace. There is outward peace, the *blessing;* inward peace, the *grace;* and everlasting peace, of *glory.* And as in a stately palace there is a lodge or court that leads into the inmost goodly rooms, so external peace is the entrance or introduction to the inward lodgings of the sweet peace of conscience and of that eternal rest in which our peace in heaven shall be happy, inasmuch as external peace affords us many accommodations and helps to the gaining and obtaining both the one and the other.—*Ephraim Udall,* 1642.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The duty of ascribing our strength and the honour of it to God; the penalty of neglecting to do so; the pleasure of so doing.

Verse 1.—National glorying should be in the Lord.

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—Royal dues, the royal treasury, loyal subjects paying their dues, the king receiving them. Smugglers and preventive men.

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—Inspired ritualism. What to do? "*Worship.*" Whom? "*The Lord.*" How? "*In the beauty of holiness.*" Absence of all allusions to place, time, order, words, form, vestments, etc.

Verse 3.—God's voice heard in trouble and above trouble, or in great personal and national calamities.

Verse 4.—Power and majesty of the gospel. Illustrate by succeeding verses.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—"The majestic voice." See Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 87.

Verse 5.—The breaking power of the gospel.

Verse 6.—The unsettling power of the gospel.

Verse 7.—The fire which goes with the word. This is a wide subject.

Verse 8.—The arousing and alarming of godless places by the preaching of the word.

Verse 9.—The revealing power of the word of God in the secrets of man's heart, and its regenerating force.

Verse 9 (*last clause*).—I. Matchless temple. II. Unanimous worship. III. Forcible motive. IV. General enthusiasm, "*glory.*" See Comment.

Verse 10.—The ever-present and undisturbed government of God.

Verse 11.—The twin blessings from the same source; their connection, and their consummation.

Verse 11.—The two wills, the two blessings, the one people, the one Lord.

PSALM XXX.

TITLE.—A Psalm and Song at the Dedication of the House of David; *or rather*, A Psalm; a Song of Dedication for the House. By David. *A song of faith since the house of Jehovah, here intended, David never lived to see. A Psalm of praise, since a sore judgment had been stayed, and a great sin forgiven. From our English version it would appear that this Psalm was intended to be sung at the building of that house of cedar which David erected for himself, when he no longer had to hide himself in the Cave of Adullam, but had become a great king. If this had been the meaning, it would have been well to observe that it is right for the believer when removing, to dedicate his new abode to God. We should call together our Christian friends, and show that where we dwell, God dwells, and where we have a tent, God has an altar. But as the song refers to the temple, for which it was David's joy to lay by in store, and for the site of which he purchased in his later days the floor of Ornan, we must content ourselves with remarking the holy faith which foresaw the fulfilment of the promise made to him concerning Solomon. Faith can sing—*

> "Glory to thee for all the grace
> I have not tasted yet."

Throughout this Psalm there are indications that David had been greatly afflicted, both personally and relatively, after having, in his presumption, fancied himself secure. When God's children prosper one way, they are generally tried another, for few of us can bear unmingled prosperity. Even the joys of hope need to be mixed with the pains of experience, and the more surely so when comfort breeds carnal security and self-confidence. Nevertheless, pardon soon followed repentance, and God's mercy was glorified. The Psalm is a song, and not a complaint. Let it be read in the light of the last days of David, when he had numbered the people, and God had chastened him, and then in mercy had bidden the angel sheathe his sword. On the floor of Ornan, the poet received the inspiration which glows in this delightful ode. It is the Psalm of the numbering of the people, and of the dedication temple which commemorated the staying of the plague.

DIVISION.—*In verses* 1, 2, *and* 3, *David extols the Lord for delivering him. Verses* 4 *and* 5 *he invites the saints to unite with him in celebrating divine compassion. In* 6 *and* 7 *he confesses the fault for which he was chastened,* 8—10 *repeats the supplication which he offered, and concludes with commemorating his deliverance and vowing eternal praise.*

EXPOSITION.

I WILL extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.
3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

1. "*I will extol thee.*" I will have high and honourable conceptions of thee, and give them utterance in my best music. Others may forget thee, murmur at thee, despise thee, blaspheme thee, but "I will extol thee," for I have been favoured above all others. I will extol thy name, thy character, thine attributes, thy mercy to me, thy great forbearance to my people; but, especially will I speak well of thyself; "I will extol thee," O Jehovah; this shall be my cheerful and constant employ. "*For thou hast lifted me up.*" Here is an antithesis, "I will exalt thee, for thou hast exalted me." I would render according to the benefit received. The Psalmist's praise was

reasonable. He had a reason to give for the praise that was in his heart. He had been drawn up like a prisoner from a dungeon, like Joseph out of the pit, and therefore he loved his deliverer. Grace has uplifted us from the pit of hell, from the ditch of sin, from the Slough of Despond, from the bed of sickness, from the bondage of doubts and fears: have we no song to offer for all this? How high has our Lord lifted us? Lifted us up into the children's place, to be adopted into the family; lifted us up into union with Christ, "to sit together with him in heavenly places." Lift high the name of our God, for he has lifted us above the stars. "*And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.*" This was the judgment which David most feared out of the three evils; he said, let me fall into the hand of the Lord, and not into the hand of man. Terrible indeed were our lot if we were delivered over to the will of our enemies. Blessed be the Lord, we have been preserved from so dire a fate. The devil and all our spiritual enemies have not been permitted to rejoice over us; for we have been saved from the fowler's snare. Our evil companions, who prophesied that we should go back to our old sins, are disappointed. Those who watched for our halting, and would fain say, "Aha! Aha! So would we have it!" have watched in vain until now. O happy they whom the Lord keeps so consistent in character that the lynx eyes of the world can see no real fault in them. Is this our case? let us ascribe all the glory to him who has sustained us in our integrity.

2. "*O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.*" David sent up prayers for himself and for his people when visited with the pestilence. He went at once to head-quarters, and not roundabout to fallible means. God is the best physician, even for our bodily infirmities. We do very wickedly and foolishly when we forget God. It was a sin in Asa that he trusted to physicians and not to God. If we must have a physician, let it be so, but still let us go to our God first of all; and, above all, remember that there can be no power to heal in medicine of itself; the healing energy must flow from the divine hand. If our watch is out of order, we take it to the watchmaker; if body or soul be in an evil plight, let us resort to him who created them, and has unfailing skill to put them in right condition. As for our spiritual diseases, nothing can heal these evils but the touch of the Lord Christ: if we do but touch the hem of his garment, we shall be made whole, while if we embrace all other physicians in our arms, they can do us no service. "*O Lord my God.*" Observe the covenant name which faith uses—"*my God.*" Thrice happy is he who can claim the Lord himself to be his portion. Note how David's faith ascends the scale; he sang "O Lord" in the first verse, but it is "O Lord my God," in the second. Heavenly heart-music is an ascending thing, like the pillars of smoke which rose from the altar of incense. "*I cried unto thee.*" I could hardly pray, but I cried; I poured out my soul as a little child pours out its desires. I cried to my God: I knew to whom to cry; I did not cry to my friends, or to any arm of flesh. Hence the sure and satisfactory result—"*Thou hast healed me.*" I know it. I am sure of it. I have the evidence of spiritual health within me now: glory be to thy name! Every humble suppliant with God who seeks release from the disease of sin, shall speed as well as the Psalmist did, but those who will not so much as seek a cure, need not wonder if their wounds putrefy and their soul dies.

3. "*O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave.*" Mark, it is not, "I hope so;" but it is, "*Thou hast; thou hast; thou hast*"—three times over. David is quite sure, beyond a doubt, that God has done great things for him, whereof he is exceeding glad. He had descended to the brink of the sepulchre, and yet was restored to tell of the forbearance of God; nor was this all, he owned that nothing but grace had kept him from the lowest hell, and this made him doubly thankful. To be spared from the grave is much; to be delivered from the pit is more; hence there is growing cause for praise, since both deliverances are alone traceable to the glorious right hand of the Lord, who is the only preserver of life, and the only Redeemer of our souls from hell.

4 Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his anger *endureth* but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

4. "*Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.*" "Join my song; assist me to express my gratitude." He felt that he could not praise God enough himself, and therefore he would enlist the hearts of others. "*Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.*" David would not fill his choir with reprobates, but with sanctified persons, who could sing from their hearts. He calls to you, ye people of God, because ye are *saints:* and if sinners are wickedly silent, let your holiness constrain *you* to sing. You are *his* saints—chosen, blood-bought, called, and set apart for God; sanctified on purpose that you should offer the daily sacrifice of praise. Abound ye in this heavenly duty. "*Sing unto the Lord.*" It is a pleasing exercise; it is a profitable engagement. Do not need to be stirred up so often to so pleasant a service. "*And give thanks.*" Let your songs be grateful songs, in which the Lord's mercies shall live again in joyful remembrance. The very remembrance of the past should tune our harps, even if present joys be lacking. "*At the remembrance of his holiness.*" Holiness is an attribute which inspires the deepest awe, and demands a reverent mind; but still give thanks at the remembrance of it. "Holy, holy, holy!" is the song of seraphim and cherubim; let us join it—not dolefully, as though we trembled at the holiness of God, but cheerfully, as humbly rejoicing in it.

5. "*For his anger endureth but a moment.*" David here alludes to those dispensations of God's providence which are the chastisement ordered in his paternal government towards his erring children, such as the plague which fell upon Jerusalem for David's sins; these are but short judgments, and they are removed as soon as real penitence sues for pardon and presents the great and acceptable sacrifice. What a mercy is this, for if the Lord's wrath smoked for a long season, flesh would utterly fail before him. God puts up his rod with great readiness as soon as its work is done; he is slow *to* anger and swift to end it. If his temporary and fatherly anger be so severe that it had need be short, what must be the terror of eternal wrath exercised by the Judge towards his adversaries? "*In his favour is life.*" As soon as the Lord looked favourably upon David, the city lived, and the king's heart lived too. We die like withered flowers when the Lord frowns, but his sweet smile revives us as the dews refresh the fields. His favour not only sweetens and cheers life, but it is life itself, the very essence of life. Who would know life, let him seek the favour of the Lord. "*Weeping may endure for a night;*" but nights are not for ever. Even in the dreary winter the day-star lights his lamp. It seems fit that in our nights the dews of grief should fall. When the Bridegroom's absence makes it dark within, it is meet that the widowed soul should pine for a renewed sight of the Well-beloved. "*But joy cometh in the morning.*" When the Sun of Righteousness comes, we wipe our eyes, and joy chases out intruding sorrow. Who would not be joyful that knows Jesus? The first beams of the morning bring us comfort when Jesus is the day-dawn, and all believers know it to be so. Mourning only lasts till morning: when the night is gone the gloom shall vanish. This is adduced as a reason for saintly singing, and forcible reason it is; short nights and merry days call for the psaltery and harp.

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.

6. "*In my prosperity.*" When all his foes were quiet, and his rebellious son dead and buried, then was the time of peril. Many a vessel founders in a calm. No temptation is so bad as tranquillity. "*I said, I shall never be moved.*" Ah! David, you said more than was wise to say, or even to

think, for God has founded the world upon the floods, to show us what a poor, mutable, movable, inconstant world it is. Unhappy he who builds upon it! He builds himself a dungeon for his hopes. Instead of conceiving that we shall never be moved, we ought to remember that we shall very soon be removed altogether. Nothing is abiding beneath the moon. Because I happen to be prosperous to-day, I must not fancy that I shall be in my high estate to-morrow. As in a wheel, the uppermost spokes descend to the bottom in due course, so is it with mortal conditions. There is a constant revolution: many who are in the dust to-day shall be highly elevated to-morrow; while those who are now aloft shall soon grind the earth. Prosperity had evidently turned the psalmist's head, or he would not have been so self-confident. He stood by grace, and yet forgot himself, and so met with a fall. Reader, is there not much of the same proud stuff in all our hearts? let us beware lest the fumes of intoxicating success get into our brains and make fools of us also.

7. "*Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.*" He ascribed his prosperity to the Lord's favour—so far good, it is well to own the hand of the Lord in all our stability and wealth. But observe that the good in a good man is not unmingled good, for this was alloyed with carnal security. His state he compares to a mountain, a molehill would have been nearer—we never think too little of ourselves. He boasted that his mountain stood strong, and yet he had before, in Psalm xxix., spoken of Sirion and Lebanon as moving like young unicorns. Was David's state more firm than Lebanon? Ah, vain conceit, too common to us all! How soon the bubble bursts when God's people get conceit into their heads, and fancy that they are to enjoy immutability beneath the stars, and constancy upon this whirling orb. How touchingly and teachingly God corrected his servant's mistake: "*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" There was no need to come to blows, a hidden face was enough. This proves, first, that David was a genuine saint, for no hiding of God's face on earth would trouble a sinner; and, secondly, that the joy of the saint is dependent upon the presence of his Lord. No mountain, however firm, can yield us rest when our communion with God is broken, and his face is concealed. However, in such a case, it is well to be troubled. The next best thing to basking in the light of God's countenance, is to be thoroughly unhappy when that bliss is denied us.

"Lord, let me weep for nought for sin!
And after none but thee!
And then I would—O that I might,
A constant weeper be!"

8 I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.

9 What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit?
Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

8. "*I cried to thee, O Lord.*" Prayer is the unfailing resource of God's people. If they are driven to their wits' end, they may still go to the mercy-seat. When an earthquake makes our mountain tremble, the throne of grace still stands firm, and we may come to it. Let us never forget to pray, and let us never doubt the success of prayer. The hand which wounds can heal: let us turn to him who smites us, and he will be entreated of us. Prayer is better solace than Cain's building a city, or Saul's seeking for music. Mirth and carnal amusements are a sorry prescription for a mind distracted and despairing: prayer will succeed where all else fails.

9. In this verse we learn the form and method of David's prayer. It was an argument with God, an urging of reasons, a pleading of his cause. It was not a statement of doctrinal opinions, nor a narration of experience, much less a sly

hit at other people under pretence of praying to God, although all these things and worse have been substituted for holy supplication at certain prayer-meetings. He wrestled with the angel of the covenant with vehement pleadings, and therefore he prevailed. Head and heart, judgment and affections, memory and intellect were all at work to spread the case aright before the Lord of love. "*What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?*" Wilt thou not lose a songster from thy choir, and one who loves to magnify thee? "*Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?*" Will there not be one witness the less to thy faithfulness and veracity? Spare, then, thy poor unworthy one for thine own name sake!

10. "*Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me.*" A short and comprehensive petition, available at all seasons, let us use it full often. It is the publican's prayer; be it ours. If God hears prayer, it is a great act of mercy; our petitions do not merit a reply. "*Lord, be thou my helper.*" Another compact, expressive, ever fitting prayer. It is suitable to hundreds of the cases of the Lord's people; it is well becoming in the minister when he is going to preach, to the sufferer upon the bed of pain, to the toiler in the field of service, to the believer under temptation, to the man of God under adversity; when God helps, difficulties vanish. He is the help of his people, a very present help in trouble. The two brief petitions of this verse are commended as ejaculations to believers full of business, denied to those longer seasons of devotion which are the rare privilege of those whose days are spent in retirement.

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

12 To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

11. Observe the contrast, God takes away the mourning of his people; and what does he give them instead of it? Quiet and peace? Ay, and a great deal more than that. "*Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing.*" He makes their hearts to dance at the sound of his name. He takes off their sackcloth. That is good. What a delight to be rid of the habiliments of woe! But what then? He clothes us. And how? With some common dress? Nay, but with that royal vestment which is the array of glorified spirits in heaven. "*Thou hast girded me with gladness.*" This is better than to wear garments of silk or cloth of gold, bedight with embroidery and bespangled with gems. Many a poor man wears this heavenly apparel wrapped around his heart, though fustian and corduroy are his only outward garb; and such a man needs not envy the emperor in all his pomp. Glory be to thee, O God, if, by a sense of full forgiveness and present justification, thou hast enriched my spiritual nature, and filled me with all the fulness of God.

12. "*To the end*"—namely, with this view and intent—"*that my glory*"—that is, my tongue or my soul—"*may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.*" It would be a shameful crime, if, after receiving God's mercies, we should forget to praise him. God would not have our tongues lie idle while so many themes for gratitude are spread on every hand. He would have no dumb children in the house. They are all to sing in heaven, and therefore they should all sing on earth. Let us sing with the poet:—

> "I would begin the music here,
> And so my soul should rise:
> Oh for some heavenly notes to bear
> My passions to the skies."

"*O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*"

> "I'll praise him in life; I'll praise him in death;
> I'll praise him as long as he lendeth me breath;
> And say when the death-dew lays cold on my brow,
> 'If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.'"

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*A Psalm and Song,*" etc. It is thought that when these two words of *Psalm and Song* are both put in the title of a Psalm, it is meant that the sound of instruments was to be joined with the voice when they were sung in the Temple, and that the voice went *before* when it is said *Song and Psalm*, and did come *after* when it is said *Psalm and Song.*—*John Diodati.*

Title.—*At the dedication of it.* חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת. The original word חָנַךְ signifies *initiari, ἐγκαινίζειν, rei novæ primam usurpationem.* So Cocceius, to initiate, or the first use that is made of anything. It was common, when any person had finished a house and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicing, and keep a festival, to which his friends are invited, and to perform some religious ceremonies, to secure the protection of heaven. Thus, when the second temple was finished, the Priests and Levites, and the rest of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, and offered numerous sacrifices. Ezra vi. 16. We read in the New Testament (John x. 22), of *the feast of the dedication* appointed by Judas Maccabæus, in memory of the purification and restoration of the temple of Jerusalem, after it had been defiled and almost laid in ruins by Antiochus Epiphanes; and celebrated annually, to the time of its destruction by Titus, by solemn sacrifices, music, songs, and hymns, to the praises of God, and feasts, and everything that could give the people pleasure, for eight days successively. Josephus Ant. i. xii. § 7. Judas ordained, that "the days of the dedication should be kept in their season, from year to year, with mirth and gladness." 1 Mac. iv. 59. And that this was customary, even amongst private persons, to keep a kind of religious festival, upon their first entrance into a new house, appears from the order of God (Deut. xx. 5), that no person who had built a new house should be forced into the army, "if he had not dedicated the house," *i. e.*, taken possession of it according to the usual ceremonies practised on such occasions; a custom this that hath more or less prevailed amongst all nations. Thus the Romans dedicated their temples, their theatres, their statues, and their palaces and houses. Suet. Octav. c. xliii. § 13; c. xxxi. § 9.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Title.—The present Psalm is the only one that is called a *shir*, or song, in the first book of the Psalms, *i. e.*, Psalms i.—xli. The word שִׁיר *shir* is found in the titles of Psalms xlv., xlvi., xlviii., lxv.—lxviii., lxxv., lxxxiii., lxxxvii., lxxxviii., xcii., cviii., cxx.—cxxxiv. Psalm xviii. is entitled, "a *shirah* (or *song*) of deliverance from his enemies," and the present *shir* may be coupled with it.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Title.—As by offering the first fruits to God they acknowledged that they received the increase of the whole year from him, in like manner, by consecrating their houses to God, they declared that they were God's tenants, confessing that they were strangers, and that it was he who lodged and gave them a habitation there. If a levy for war, therefore, took place, this was a just cause of exemption, when any one alleged that he had not yet dedicated his house. Besides, they were at the same time admonished by this ceremony, that every one enjoyed his house aright and regularly, only when he so regulated it that it was as it were a sanctuary of God, and that true piety and the pure worship of God reigned in it. The types of the law have now ceased, but we must still keep to the doctrine of Paul, that whatsoever things God appoints for our use, are still "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." 1. Tim. iv. 4, 5.—*John Calvin.*

Whole Psalm.—Calmet supposes it to have been made by David on the dedication of the place which he built on the threshing-floor of the Araunah, after the grievous *plague* which had so nearly desolated the kingdom. 2 Sam. xxiv. 25; 1 Chron. xxi. 26. All the parts of the Psalm agree to this: and they agree to this so well, and to no other hypothesis, that I feel myself justified in modelling the comment on this principle alone.—*Adam Clarke.*

Whole Psalm.—In the following verses I have endeavoured to give the spirit of the Psalm, and to preserve the frequent antitheses.

I will exalt thee, Lord of hosts,
For thou'st exalted me;
Since thou hast silenced Satan's boasts,
I'll therefore boast in thee.

My sins had brought me near the grave,
The grave of black despair;
I look'd, but there was none to save,
Till I look'd up in prayer.

In answer to my piteous cries,
From hell's dark brink I'm brought:
My Jesus saw me from the skies,
And swift salvation wrought.

All through the night I wept full sore,
But morning brought relief;
That hand, which broke my bones before,
Then broke my bonds of grief.

My mourning he to dancing turns,
For sackcloth joy he gives,
A moment, Lord, thine anger burns,
But long thy favour lives.

Sing with me then, ye favoured men,
Who long have known his grace;
With thanks recall the seasons when
Ye also sought his face.

C. H. S.

Verse 1.—"*I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up.*" I will lift thee up, for thou hast lifted me up.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—"*Thou hast lifted me up.*" דִּלִּיתָנִי. The verb is used, in its original meaning, to denote *the reciprocating motion of the buckets of a well*, one descending as the other rises, and *vice versa;* and is here applied with admirable propriety, to point out the various reciprocations and changes of David's fortunes, as described in this Psalm, as to prosperity and adversity; and particularly that gracious reverse of his afflicted condition which he now celebrates, God having raised him up to great honour and prosperity; for having built his palace, he "perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake."—2 Sam. v. 12.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 2.—"*Thou hast healed me.*" תִּרְפָּאֵנִי. The verb is used, either for the healing of bodily disorders (Psalm ciii. 3), or to denote the happy alteration of any person's affairs, either in private or public life, by the removal of any kind of distress, personal or national. Psalm cvii. 20; Isaiah xix. 22. So in the place before us: "*Thou hast healed me,*" means, Thou hast brought me out of my distresses, hast restored my health, and rendered me safe and prosperous. Under Saul, he was frequently in the most imminent danger of his life, out of which God wonderfully brought him, which he strongly expresses by saying, "*Thou hast brought up my soul from* Hades: *thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*" I thought myself lost, and that nothing could prevent my destruction, and we can scarce help looking on the deliverance thou hast vouchsafed me otherwise than as a kind of restoration from the dead: *Thou hast revived me,* or recovered me to life, *from amongst those who go down to the pit;* according to the literal rendering of the latter clause.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 4.—"*Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.*" If it were to sing of another thing, I should require the whole quire of God's creatures to join in the singing; but now that it is to sing of God's "*holiness,*" what should profane

voices do in the concert? None but "*saints*," are fit to sing of "holiness," and specially of God's holiness; but most specially with songs of holiness.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4.—"*Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his.*" As God requires outward and inward worship, so a spiritual frame for inward worship may be forwarded by the outward composure. Gazing drowsiness hinders the activity of the soul, but the contrary temper furthers and helps it. Singing calls up the soul into such a posture, and doth, as it were, awaken it: it is a lively rousing up of the heart. Singing God's praise is a work of the most meditation of any we perform in public. It keeps the heart longest upon the thing spoken. Prayer and hearing pass quick from one sentence to another; this sticks long upon it. Meditation must follow after hearing the word, and praying with the minister—for new sentences, still succeeding, give not liberty, in the instant, well to muse and consider upon what is spoken; but in this you pray and meditate. God hath so ordered this duty, that, while we are employed in it, we feed and chew the cud together. "Higgaion," or "Meditation," is set upon some passages of the Psalms, as Psalm ix. 16. The same may be writ up the whole duty, and all parts of it; namely, "Meditation." Set before you one in the posture to sing to the best advantage: eyes lifted to heaven, denote his desire that his heart may be there too; he hath before him a line or verse of prayer, mourning, praise, mention of God's works; how fairly now may his heart spread itself in meditation on the thing, while he is singing it over! Our singing is measured in deliberate time not more for music than meditation. He that seeks not, finds not, this advantage in singing Psalms—hath not yet learned what it means.—*John Lightfoot*, 1602—1675.

Verse 5.—"*His anger.*" Seeing God is often angry with his own servants, what cause have those of you who fear him, to bless him that he is not angry with you, and that you do not feel his displeasure! He sets up others as his mark against which he shoots his arrows; you hear others groaning for his departure, and yet your hearts are not saddened as theirs are; your eyes can look up towards heaven with hope, whilst theirs are clouded with a veil of sorrow; he speaks roughly to them, but comfortable words to you; he seems to set himself against them as his enemies, whilst he deals with you as a loving friend; you see a reviving smile in his face and they can discern nothing there but one continued and dreadful frown. O admire, and for ever wonder at the sovereign, distinguishing grace of God. Are you that are at ease better than many of his people that are now thrown into a fiery furnace? Have you less dross than they? Have they sinned, think you, at a higher rate than you have ever done? He is angry with them for their lukewarmness, for their backsliding; and have your hearts always burned with love? Have your feet always kept his way and not declined? Have you never wandered? Have you never turned aside to the right hand or to the left? Surely you have; and therefore, what a mercy is it, that he is not angry with you as well as with them. . . . . Do not presume for all this; for though he is not angry yet with you, he may be so. This was the fault of David: "*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved;*" but it immediately follows, "*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" The sun shines now upon you, the candle of the Lord does refresh your tabernacle; but you may meet with many storms, and clouds, and darkness before you come to your journey's end. The disciples were once greatly pleased with the glory of the transfiguration; and during the delightful interview between Christ, and Moses, and Elias, they thought themselves as in heaven; but a cloud came and obscured the preceding glory, and then the poor men were afraid. It is true the anger of God *endureth but for a moment;* but even that moment is very sad, and terrible beyond expression. Weeping endureth for "*a night;*" but it may be a very bitter and doleful night for all this. It is a night like that of the Egyptians: when they arose they saw all their first-born slain, and there was a hideous universal cry and mourning

throughout all the land. So this night of the anger of the Lord may destroy all our comforts, and make the first-born of our strength, the confidence and pleasure of our hopes to give up the ghost.—*Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 5.—"*In his favour is life.*"—Let us see wherein the weight of the blessing and cursing of sheep and goats doth lie. It is not the gift of eternal life that is our happiness in heaven ; but as David saith, "*in his favour is life.*" If a damned soul should be admitted to the fruition of all the pleasures of eternal life without the favour of God, heaven would be hell to him. It is not the dark and horrid house of woe that maketh a soul miserable in hell, but God's displeasure, *ite maledicti.* If an elect soul should be cast thither, and retain the favour of God, hell would be an heaven to him, and his joy could not all the devils of hell take from him ; his night would be turned into day.—*Edward Marbury.*

Verse 5.—As an apprentice holds out in hard labour and (it may be) bad usage for seven years together or more, and in all that time is serviceable to his master without any murmuring or repining, because he sees that the time wears away, and that his bondage will not last always, but he shall be set at large and made a freeman in the conclusion : thus should everyone that groaneth under the burthen of any cross or affliction whatsoever, bridle his affections, possess his soul in patience, and cease from all murmuring and repining whatsoever, considering well with himself, that the rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous ; that *weeping may abide at evening, but joy cometh in the morning ;* and that troubles will have an end, and not continue for ever.—*John Spencer.*

Verse 5.—How often have we experienced the literal truth of that verse, "*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning!*" How heavily does any trouble weigh on us *at night!* Our wearied nerve and brain seem unable to bear up under the pressure. Our pulse throbs, and the fevered restless body refuses to help in the work of endurance. Miserable and helpless we feel ; and passionately weep under the force of the unresisted attack. At last sleep comes. Trouble, temptation, whatever it be that strives to overcome us, takes the one step too far which overleaps its mark, and by sheer force drives our poor humanity beyond the present reach of further trial. After such a night of struggle, and the heavy sleep of exhaustion, we awake with a vague sense of trouble. Our thoughts gather, and we *wonder* over our own violence, as the memory of it returns upon us. What was it that seemed so hopeless—so dark ? Why were we so helpless and despairing ? Things do not look so *now*—sad indeed still, but endurable—hard, but no longer impossible—bad enough perhaps, but we despair no more. "*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*" And so, when life with its struggles and toils and sins, bringing us perpetual conflict, ends at last in the fierce struggle of *death*, then God "giveth his beloved sleep." They sleep in Jesus, and awake to the joy of a morning which shall know no wane—the morning of joy. The Sun of Righteousness is beaming on them. Light is now on all their ways. And they can only wonder when they recall the despair and darkness, and toil, and violence of their earthly life, and say, as they have often said on earth, "Weeping has endured only for *the night*, and now it is morning, and joy has come !" And our sorrows, our doubts, our difficulties, our long looks forward, with despair of enduring strength for so long a night of trial—Where are they ? Shall we not feel as is so beautifully described in the words of one of our hymns—

"When in our Father's happy land
We meet our own once more,
Then we shall scarcely understand
Why we have wept before."

Mary B. M. Duncan, 1825—1865.

Verse 5.—"*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*" Their mourning shall last but till morning. God will turn their winter's night

into a summer's day, their sighing into singing, their grief into gladness, their mourning into music, their bitter into sweet, their wilderness into a paradise. The life of a Christian is filled up with interchanges of sickness and health, weakness and strength, want and wealth, disgrace and honour, crosses, and comforts, miseries and mercies, joys and sorrows, mirth and mourning; all honey would harm us, all wormwood would undo us; a composition of both is the best way in the world to keep our souls in a healthy constitution. It is best and most for the health of the soul that the south wind of mercy, and the north wind of adversity, do both blow upon it; and though every wind that blows shall blow good to the saints, yet certainly their sins die most, and their graces thrive best, when they are under the drying, nipping north wind of calamity, as well as under the warm, cherishing south wind of mercy and prosperity.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 5.—"*Joy cometh in the morning.*" The godly man's joy "*cometh in the morning,*" when the wicked man's goeth; for to him "the morning is even as the shadow of death." Job xxiv. 17. He is not only afraid of reproof and punishment, but he grieves and suffers sufficiently, though nobody should know of his actions, for the impair and loss, and misspence of his strength and his time and his money.—*Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 5.—In the second half of the verse "*weeping*" is personified, and represented by the figure of a wanderer, who leaves in the morning the lodging, into which he had entered the preceding evening. After him another guest arrives, namely, "*joy.*"—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 5.—The princely prophet says plainly, "*heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*" As the two angels that came to Lot lodged with him for a night, and when they had dispatched their errand, went away in the morning; so afflictions, which are the angels or the messengers of God. God sendeth afflictions to do an errand unto us; to tell us we forget God, we forget ourselves, we are too proud, too self-conceited, and such like; and when they have said as they were bid, then presently they are gone.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verses 5—10.—When a man's heart is set upon the creatures, there being thorns in them all, therefore if he will grasp too much of them, or too hard, he shall find it. God's children are trained up so to it, that God will not let them go away with a sin; if they be too adulterously affected, they shall find a cross in such a thing. You may observe this in the thirtieth Psalm; there you may see the circle God goes in with his children. David has many afflictions, as appeareth by the fifth verse: I cried, and then God returned to me, and joy came. What did David then? "I said, I shall never be moved:" his heart grew wanton, but God would not let him go away so: "God turned away his face, and I was troubled." At the seventh verse he is, you see, in trouble again: well, David cries again, at the eighth and tenth verses, and then God turned his mourning into joy again. And this to be his dealing you shall find in all the Scriptures; but because we find his dealing set so close together in this Psalm, therefore I name it.—*John Preston, D.D.* (1587—1628), *in* "*The Golden Scepter held forth to the Humble.*"

Verse 6.—"*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.*" Our entering upon a special service for God, or receiving a special favour from God, are two solemn seasons which Satan makes use of for temptation. . . . . We are apt to get proud, careless, and confident, after or upon such employments and favours; even as men are apt to sleep or surfeit upon a full meal, or to forget themselves when they are advanced to honour. Job's great peace and plenty made him, as he confesseth, so confident, that he concluded he should "die in his nest." Chap. xxix. 18. David enjoying the favour of God in a more than ordinary measure, though he was more acquainted with vicissitudes and changes than most of men, grows secure in his apprehension that he "*should never be moved;*" but he acknowledgeth his mistake, and leaves it upon record as an

experience necessary for others to take warning by, that when he became warm under the beams of God's countenance, then he was apt to fall into security; and this it seems was usual with him in all such cases—when he was most secure he was nearest some trouble or disquiet. "*Thou didst hide thy face*"—and then to be sure the devil will show him his—"*and I was troubled.*" Enjoyments beget confidence; confidence brings forth carelessness; carelessness makes God withdraw, and gives opportunity to Satan to work unseen. And thus, as armies after victory growing secure, are oft surprised; so are we oft after our spiritual advancements thrown down.—*Richard Gilpin.*

Verse 6.—"*In my prosperity.*" בְּשַׁלְוִי The word denotes *peace and tranquillity, arising from an affluent prosperous condition.* When God had settled him quietly on the throne, he thought all his troubles were over, and that he should enjoy uninterrupted happiness; and that God "*had made his mountain so strong, as that it should never be moved;*" *i. e.*, placed him as secure from all danger as though he had taken refuge upon an inaccessible mountain; or made his prosperity firm, and subject to no more alteration, than a mountain is liable to be removed out of its place; or, raised him to an eminent degree of honour and prosperity; a mountain, by its height, being a very natural representation of a very superior condition, remarkable for power, affluence, and dignity. He had taken the fortress of Mount Sion, which was properly *his mountain*, as he had fixed on it for his dwelling. It was strong by nature, and rendered almost impregnable by the fortifications he had added to it. This he regarded as the effect of God's favour to him, and promised himself that his peace and happiness for the future should be as undisturbed and unshaken as Mount Sion itself.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 6.—"*In my prosperity.*" Prosperity is more pleasant than profitable to us. Though in show it look like a fair summer, yet it is indeed a wasting winter, and spendeth all the fruit we have reaped in the harvest of sanctified affliction. We are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. To be always indulged of God, and never to taste of trouble, is rather a token of God's neglect than of his tender love.—*William Struther.*

Verse 7.—It is rare to receive much of this world, and not as the prodigal to go afar off; 'tis hard to keep close to God in prosperity, when we have much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God, and make him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in him; we are very apt in such a case to contract a carnal frame, let go our hold of God, discustom ourselves to the exercise of faith, abate and estrange our affections from God. See how it was with David: "*I said, I shall never be moved, thou hast made my mountain so strong.*" I solaced myself on these outward accommodations, as if I needed no other support, strength, or content, and there were no fear of a change; no care now to make God my constant joy and stay, and reckon upon God only for my portion, and that I must follow him with a cross, and be conformed to my Saviour, in being crucified to the world. What comes of this? "*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;*" namely, because he had too much indulged a life of sense. Children that are held up by their nurses' hand, and mind not to feel their feet and ground when the nurses let them go, they fall, as if they had no feet or ground to stand upon. Or thus: we are like children, who, playing in the golden sunshine, and following their sport, stray so far from their father's house, that night coming upon them ere they are aware, they are as it were lost, and full of fears, not knowing how to recover home. The world steals away our hearts from God, gives so few opportunities for the exercise of the life of faith, and such advantages to a life of sense, wears off the sense of our dependence on God, and need thereof, so that when we are put to it by affliction, we are ready to miscarry ere we can recover our weapon or hold. Faith is our cordial (Psalm xxvii. 13); now if it be not at hand (as in health, when we have no need of it, it use to be) we may faint ere we recover the use of it.—*Elias Pledger's Sermon in* "*The Morning Exercises,*" 1677.

Verse 7.—"*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" What soul can be deserted and not be afflicted? Certainly his absence cannot but be lamented with greatest grief, whose presence the soul prizeth above all earthly joy; when the evidence of salvation is obscured, the light of God's countenance darkened, the comforts of the Spirit detained, then the heavens appear not so clear, the promises taste not so sweet, the ordinances prove not so lively, yea, the clouds which hang over the soul gather blackness, doubts arise, fears overflow, terrors increase, troubles enlarge, and the soul becomes languishingly afflicted, even with all variety of disquietments.—*Robert Mossom.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" A believer puts on the sackcloth of contrition, for having put off the garment of perfection. As the sugar-loaf is dissolved, and weeps itself way, when dipped in wine; so do our hearts melt under a sense of divine love.—*William Secker.*

Verse 7 (*last clause*).—No verse can more plainly teach us that glorious and comforting truth on which the mediæval writers especially love to dwell, that it is the looking, or not looking, of God upon his creature, that forms the happiness or the misery of that creature; that those secret springs of joy which sometimes seem to rise up of themselves, and with which a stranger intermeddleth not, are nothing but God's direct and immediate looking on us; while the sorrow for which we cannot assign any especial cause—call it melancholy, or low spirits, or by whatever other name—is nothing but his turning away his face from us.—*John Mason Neale.*

Verse 7 (*last clause*).—Is spiritual desertion and the hiding of God's face matter of affliction, and casting down to believers? Yes, yes; it quails their hearts, nothing can comfort them. "*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" Outward afflictions do but break the skin, this touches the quick; they like rain fall only upon the tiles, this soaks into the house; but Christ brings to believers substantial matter of consolation against the troubles of desertion; he himself was deserted of God for a time, that they might not be deserted for ever.—*John Flavel.*

Verse 7 (*last clause*).—If God be thy portion, then there is no loss in all the world that lies so hard and so heavy upon thee as the loss of thy God. There is no loss under heaven that doth so affect and afflict a man that hath God for his portion, as the loss of his God. David met with many a loss, but no loss made so sad and so great a breach upon his spirit as the loss of the face of God, the loss of the favour of God: "*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*" The Hebrew word נָהַל *bahal* signifies to be greatly troubled, to be sorely terrified, as you may see in that 1 Sam. xxviii. 21, "And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled." Here is the same Hebrew word *bahal*. Saul was so terrified, affrighted, and disanimated with the dreadful news that the devil in Samuel's likeness told him, that his very vital spirits so failed him, that he fell into a deadly swoon. And it was even so with David upon God's hiding of his face. David was like a withered flower that had lost all its sap, life, and vigour, when God had wrapped himself up in a cloud. The life of some creatures lieth in the light and warmth of the sun; and so doth the life of the saints lie in the light and warmth of God's countenance. And, as in an eclipse of the sun, there is a drooping in the whole frame of nature, so when God hides his face, gracious souls cannot but droop and languish, and bow down themselves before him. Many insensible creatures, some by opening and shutting, as marigolds and tulips, others by bowing and inclining the head, as the solsequy* and mallow-flowers, are so sensible of the presence and absence of the sun, that there seems to be such a sympathy between the sun and them, that if the sun be gone or clouded, they wrap up themselves or hang down their heads, as being unwilling to be seen by any eye but his that fills them: and just thus it was with David when God had hid his face in a cloud.—*Thomas Brooks.*

* The early name of the "*sun*-flower." The *solsequium* of Linnæus.

Verse 8.—"*I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication.*" Bernard, under a fiction, proposeth a fable well worthy our beholding: therein the kings of Babylon and Jerusalem, signifying the state of the world and the church, always warring together; in which encounter, at length it fell out, that one of the soldiers of Jerusalem was fled to the castle of Justice. Siege laid to the castle, and a multitude of enemies entrenched round about it, Fear gave over all hope, but Prudence ministered her comfort. "Does thou not know," saith she, "that our king is the King of glory; the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle? Let us therefore despatch a messenger that may inform him of our necessities." Fear replieth, "But who is able to break through? Darkness is upon the face of the earth, and our walls are begirt with a watchful troop of armed men, and we, utterly inexpert of the way into so far a country." Whereupon Justice is consulted. "Be of good cheer," saith Justice, "I have a messenger of especial trust, well known to the king and his court, Prayer by name, who knoweth to address herself by ways unknown in the stillest silence of the night, till she cometh to the secrets and chamber of the King himself." Forthwith she goeth, and findeth the gates shut, knocketh amain, "Open, ye gates of righteousness, and be ye opened, ye everlasting doors, that I may come in and tell the King of Jerusalem how our case standeth." Doubtless the trustiest and effectuallest messenger we have to send is Prayer. If we send up merits, the stars in heaven will disdain it, that we which dwell at the footstool of God dare to presume so far, when the purest creatures in heaven are impure in his sight. If we send up fear and distrustfulness, the length of the way will tire them out. They are as heavy and lumpish as gads of iron; they will sink to the ground before they come half-way to the throne of salvation. If we send up blasphemies and curses, all the creatures betwixt heaven and earth will band themselves against us. The sun and the moon will rain down blood; the fire, hot burning coals; the air, thunderbolts upon our heads. Prayer, I say again, is the surest ambassador; which neither the tediousness of the way, nor difficulties of the passage, can hinder from her purpose; quick of speed, faithful for trustiness, happy for success, able to mount above the eagles of the sky, into the heaven of heavens, and as a chariot of fire bearing us aloft into the presence of God to seek his assistance.—*John King.*

Verse 9.—"*What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?*" Implying that he would willingly die, if he could thereby do any real service to God, or his country. Phil. ii. 17. But he saw not what good could be done by his dying in the bed of sickness, as might be if he had died in the bed of honour. Lord, saith he, wilt thou sell one of "thine own people for nought, and not increase thy wealth by the price?" Psalm xliv. 12.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 9.—"*What profit is there in my blood,*" etc. The little gain that the Lord would have by denying his people in the mercies they request, may also be used as a plea in prayer. David beggeth his own life of God, using this plea, "*What profit is there in my blood?*" So did the captive church plead (Psalm xliv. 12); "Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price." So then, poor saints of God when they come and tell the Lord in their prayers that indeed he may condemn, or confound, or cut or cast them off; he may continue to frown upon them; he may deny such-and-such requests of theirs, for such-and-such just causes in them; but what will he gain thereby? He may gain many praises, etc., by hearing them, and helping them; but what good will it do him to see them oppressed by the enemies of their souls? or what delight would it be to him to see them sighing and sinking, and fainting under sad pressures, etc.? this is an allowed and a very successful kind of pleading.—*Thomas Cobbet.*

Verse 9.—"*Shall the dust praise thee?*" Can any number be sufficient to praise thee? Can there ever be mouths enough to declare thy truth? And may not I make one—a sinful one I know—but yet one in the number, if thou be pleased to spare me from descending into the pit?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 9.—Prayer that is likely to prevail with God must be argumentative. God loves to have us plead with him and overcome him with arguments in prayer.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.*" This might be true of David, delivered from his calamity; it was true of Christ, arising from the tomb, to die no more; it is true of the penitent, exchanging his sackcloth for the garments of salvation; and it will be verified in us all, at the last day, when we shall put off the dishonours of the grave, to shine in glory everlasting.—*George Horne.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou hast turned.*" I do so like the ups and downs in the Psalms.—*Adelaide Newton.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.*" I say with the apostle, "Overcome evil with good," sorrow with joy. Joy is the true remedy for sorrow. It never had, never could have any other. We must always give the soul that weeps reason to rejoice; all other consolation is utterly useless.—*Alexander Rodolph Vinet, D.D.*, 1797—1847.

Verse 11.—"*Thou hast girded me with gladness.*" My "sackcloth" was but a loose garment about me, which might easily be put off at pleasure, but my "*gladness*" is *girt* about me, to be fast and sure, and cannot leave me though it would; at least none shall be able to take it from me.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 12.—Even as the Chaldeans formerly measured their natural day differently from the Israelites; they put the day first and the night after; but the Israelites, on the contrary, according to the order that was observed in the creation; for in the beginning darkness was upon the face of the deep, and of every one of the six days it is said, "The evening and the morning were the first day," etc. So the times of the world and of the church are differently disposed; for the world begins hers by the day of temporal prosperity, and finishes it by a night of darkness and anguish that is eternal; but the church, on the contrary, begins hers by the night of adversity, which she suffers for awhile, and ends them by a day of consolation which she shall have for ever. The prophet in this Psalm begins with the *anger* of God, but ends with his *favour:* as of old, when they entered into the tabernacle they did at first see unpleasant things, as the knives of the sacrifices, the blood of victims, the fire that burned upon the altar, which consumed the offerings; but when they passed a little farther there was the holy place, the candlestick of gold, the shewbread, and the altar of gold on which they offered perfumes; and in fine, there was the holy of holies, and the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat and the cherubims, which was called the face of God.—*Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 12.—"*I will give thanks.*" What is praise? The rent we owe to God; and the larger the farm the greater the rent should be.—*G. S. Bowes*, 1863.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Title.—House dedication, and how to arrange it.

Whole Psalm.—In this ode we may see the workings of David's mind before, and under, and after, the affliction. I. *Before* the affliction: 6. II. *Under* the affliction: 7—10. III. *After* the affliction: 11, 12.—*William Jay.*

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—God and his people exalting each other.

Verse 1 (*second clause*).—The happiness of being preserved so as not to be the scorn of our enemies.

Verse 1.—The disappointment of the devil.

Verse 2.—The sick man, the physician, the night-bell, the medicine, and the cure ; or, a covenant God, a sick saint, a crying heart, a healing hand.

Verse 3.—*Upbringing and preservation*, two choice mercies ; made the more illustrious by two terrible evils, "*grave*," and "*pit*"; traced immediately to the Lord, "*thou hast.*"

Verse 4.—*Song*, a sacred service ; "*saints*" especially called to it ; *divine holiness*, a choice subject for it ; *Memory*, an admirable aid in it.

Verse 5.—The anger of God in relation to his people.

Verse 5.—*The night of weeping, and the morning of joy.*

Verse 5.—"*Life*" in God's "*favour.*"

Verse 5.—The transient nature of the believer's trouble, and the permanence of his joy.

Verse 6.—The peculiar dangers of "*prosperity.*"

Verse 6—12.—David's prosperity had lulled him into a state of undue security ; God sent him this affliction to rouse him from it. The successive frames of his mind are here clearly marked ; and must successively be considered as they are here presented to our view. I. His carnal security. II. His spiritual dereliction. III. His fervent prayers. IV. His speedy recovery. V. His grateful acknowledgments.—*Charles Simeon.*

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—Carnal security ; its causes, dangers, and cures.

Verse 7 (*last clause*).—The gracious bemoanings of a soul in spiritual darkness.

Verse 8, in connection with verse 3 *prayer the universal remedy.*

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—Arguments with God for continued life and renewed favour.

Verse 9 (*last clause*).—The resurrection, a time in which the "*dust*" shall "*praise*" God, and "*declare*" his "*truth.*"

Verse 10.—Two gems of prayer ; short, but full and needful.

Verse 10.—"*Lord, be thou my helper.*" I see many fall ; I shall fall too except thou hold me up. I am weak ; I am exposed to temptation. My heart is deceitful. My enemies are strong. I cannot trust in man ; I dare not trust in myself. The grace I have received will not keep me without thee. "*Lord, be thou my helper.*" In every duty; in every conflict ; in every trial ; in every effort to promote the Lord's cause ; in every season of prosperity ; in every hour we live, this short and inspired prayer is suitable. May it flow from our hearts, be often on our lips, and be answered in our experience. For if the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot perform ; there is no foe which we cannot overcome ; there is no difficulty which we cannot surmount.—*James Smith's Daily Remembrancer.*

Verse 11.—*Transformations.* Sudden ; complete ; divine, "*thou ;*" personal, "*for me ;*" gracious.

Verse 11.—*Holy dancing :* open up the metaphor.

Verse 11.—The believer's change of raiment : illustrate by life of Mordecai or Joseph ; mention all the garbs the believer is made to wear, as a mourner, a beggar, a criminal, &c.

Verse 12.—Our "*glory*," and its relation to God's glory.

Verse 12.—The end of gracious dispensations.

Verse 12.—Silence—when sinful.

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—The believer's vow and the time for making it. See the whole Psalm.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTIETH PSALM.

Meditations upon the XXX Psalme of David. By Sir Richard Baker. [See page 10.]

In Chandler's Life of David [*Vol. II., pp.* 8—15), *there is an Exposition of Psalm XXX.*

PSALM XXXI.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician—a Psalm of David. *The dedication to the chief musician proves that this song of mingled measures and alternate strains of grief and woe was intended for public singing, and thus a deathblow is given to the notion that nothing but praise should be sung. Perhaps the Psalms, thus marked, might have been set aside as too mournful for temple worship, if special care had not been taken by the Holy Spirit to indicate them as being designed for the public edification of the Lord's people. May there not also be in Psalms thus designated a peculiarly distinct reference to the Lord Jesus? He certainly manifests himself very clearly in the twenty-second, which bears this title; and in the one before us we plainly hear his dying voice in the fifth verse. Jesus is chief everywhere, and in all the holy songs of his saints he is the chief musician. The surmises that Jeremiah penned this Psalm need no other answer than the fact that it is "a Psalm of David."*

SUBJECT.—*The psalmist in dire affliction appeals to his God for help with much confidence and holy importunity, and ere long finds his mind so strengthened that he magnifies the Lord for his great goodness. Some have thought that the occasion in his troubled life which led to this Psalm, was the treachery of the men of Keilah, and we have felt much inclined to this conjecture; but after reflection it seems to us that its very mournful tone, and its allusion to his iniquity demand a later date, and it may be more satisfactory to illustrate it by the period when Absalom had rebelled, and his courtiers were fled from him, while lying lips spread a thousand malicious rumours against him. It is perhaps quite as well that we have no settled season mentioned, or we might have been so busy in applying it to David's case as to forget its suitability to our own.*

DIVISION.—*There are no great lines of demarcation; throughout the strain undulates, falling into valleys of mourning, and rising with hills of confidence. However, we may for convenience arrange it thus: David testifying his confidence in God pleads for help,* 1—6; *expresses gratitude for mercies received,* 7, 8; *particularly describes his case,* 9—13; *vehemently pleads for deliverance,* 14—18; *confidently and thankfully expects a blessing,* 19—22; *and closes by showing the bearing of his case upon all the people of God.*

EXPOSITION.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily; be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.

3 For thou *art* my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* my strength.

5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities; but I trust in the LORD.

1. "*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*" Nowhere else do I fly for shelter, let the tempest howl as it may. The psalmist has one refuge, and that the best one. He casts out the great sheet anchor of his faith in the time of storm. Let other things be doubtful, yet the fact that he relies upon Jehovah, David lays down most positively; and he begins with it, lest by stress of trial he should

afterwards forget it. This avowal of faith is the fulcrum by means of which he labours to uplift and remove his trouble ; he dwells upon it as a comfort to himself and a plea with God. No mention is made of merit, but faith relies upon divine favour and faithfulness, and upon that alone. "*Let me never be ashamed.*" How can the Lord permit the man to be ultimately put to shame who depends alone upon him ? This would not be dealing like a God of truth and grace. It would bring dishonour upon God himself if faith were not in the end rewarded. It will be an ill day indeed for religion when trust in God brings no consolation and no assistance. "*Deliver me in thy righteousness.*" Thou are not unjust to desert a trustful soul, or to break thy promises ; thou wilt vindicate the righteousness of thy mysterious providence, and give me joyful deliverance. Faith dares to look even to the sword of justice for protection : while God is righteous, faith will not be left to be proved futile and fanatical. How sweetly the declaration of faith in this first verse sounds, if we read it at the foot of the cross, beholding the promise of the Father as yea and amen through the Son ; viewing God with faith's eye as he stands revealed in Jesus crucified.

2. "*Bow down thine ear to me.*" Condescend to my low estate ; listen to me attentively as one who would hear every word. Heaven with its transcendent glories of harmony might well engross the divine ear, but yet the Lord has an hourly regard to the weakest moanings of his poorest people. "*Deliver me speedily.*" We must not set times and seasons, yet in submission we may ask for swift as well as sure mercy. God's mercies are often enhanced in value by the timely haste which he uses in their bestowal ; if they came late they might be too late—but he rides upon a cherub, and flies upon the wings of the wind when he intends the good of his beloved. "*Be thou my strong rock.*" Be my Engedi, my Adullam ; my immutable, immovable, impregnable, sublime, resort. "*For an house of defence to save me,*" wherein I may *dwell* in safety, not merely running to thee for temporary shelter, but abiding in thee for eternal salvation. How very simply does the good man pray, and yet with what weight of meaning ! he uses no ornamental flourishes, he is too deeply in earnest to be otherwise than plain : it were well if all who engage in public prayer would observe the same rule.

3. "*For thou art my rock and my fortress.*" Here the tried soul avows yet again its full confidence in God. Faith's repetitions are not vain. The avowal of our reliance upon God in times of adversity is a principal method of glorifying him. Active service is good, but the passive confidence of faith is not one jot less esteemed in the sight of God. The words before us appear to embrace and fasten upon the Lord with a fiducial grip which is not to be relaxed. The two personal pronouns, like sure nails, lay hold upon the faithfulness of the Lord. O for grace to have our heart fixed in firm unstaggering belief in God ! The figure of a rock and a fortress may be illustrated to us in these times by the vast fortress of Gibraltar, often besieged by our enemies, but never wrested from us : ancient strongholds, though far from impregnable by our modes of warfare, were equally important in those remoter ages—when in the mountain fastnesses, feeble bands felt themselves to be secure. Note the singular fact that David asked the Lord to be his rock (verse 2) because he was his rock ; and learn from it that we may pray to enjoy in experience what we grasp by faith. Faith is the foundation of prayer. "*Therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.*" The psalmist argues like a logician with his fors and therefores. Since I do sincerely trust thee, saith he, O my God, be my director. To lead and to guide are two things very like each other, but patient thought will detect different shades of meaning, especially as the last may mean *provide for me.* The double word indicates an urgent need—we require double direction, for we are fools, and the way is rough. Lead me as a soldier, guide me as a traveller ! lead me as a babe, guide me as a man ; lead me when thou art with me, but guide me even if thou be absent ; lead me by thy hand, guide me by thy word. The argument used is one which is fetched from the armoury of

free grace: not for my own sake, but *for thy name's sake* guide me. Our appeal is not to any fancied virtue in our own names, but to the glorious goodness and graciousness which shine resplendent in the character of Israel's God. It is not possible that the Lord should suffer his own honour to be tarnished, but this would certainly be the case if those who trusted him should perish. This was Moses' plea, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

4. "*Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me.*" The enemies of David were cunning as well as mighty; if they could not conquer him by power, they would capture him by craft. Our own spiritual foes are of the same order—they are of the serpent's brood, and seek to ensnare us by their guile. The prayer before us supposes the possibility of the believer being caught like a bird; and, indeed, we are so foolish that this often happens. So deftly does the fowler do his work that simple ones are soon surrounded by it. The text asks that even out of the meshes of the net the captive one may be delivered; and this is a proper petition, and one which can be granted; from between the jaws of the lion and out of the belly of hell can eternal love rescue the saint. It may need a sharp *pull* to save a soul from the net of temptation, and a mighty pull to extricate a man from the snares of malicious cunning, but the Lord is equal to every emergency, and the most skilfully placed nets of the hunter shall never be able to hold his chosen ones. Woe unto those who are so clever at net laying: they who tempt others shall be destroyed themselves. Villains who lay traps in secret shall be punished in public. "*For thou art my strength.*" What an inexpressible sweetness is to be found in these few words! How joyfully may we enter upon labours, and how cheerfully may we endure sufferings when we can lay hold upon celestial power. Divine power will rend asunder all the toils of the foe, confound their politics and frustrate their knavish tricks; he is a happy man who has such matchless might engaged upon his side. Our own strength would be of little service when embarrassed in the nets of base cunning, but the Lord's strength is ever available; we have but to invoke it, and we shall find it near at hand. If by faith we are depending alone upon the strength of the strong God of Israel, we may use our holy reliance as a plea in supplication.

5. "*Into thine hand I commit my spirit.*" These living words of David were our Lord's dying words, and have been frequently used by holy men in their hour of departure. Be assured that they are good, choice, wise, and solemn words; we may use them now and in the last tremendous hour. Observe, the object of the good man's solicitude in life and death is not his body or his estate, but his spirit; this is his jewel, his secret treasure; if this be safe, all is well. See what he does with his pearl! He commits it to the hand of his God; it came from him, it is his own, he has aforetime sustained it, he is able to keep it, and it is most fit that he should receive it. All things are safe in Jehovah's hands; what we entrust to the Lord will be secure, both now and in that day of days towards which we are hastening. Without reservation the good man yields himself to his heavenly Father's hand; it is enough for him to be there; it is peaceful living and glorious dying to repose in the care of heaven. At all times we should commit and continue to commit our all to Jesus' sacred care, then, though life may hang on a thread, and adversities may multiply as the sands of the sea, our soul shall dwell at ease, and delight itself in quiet resting places. "*Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*" Redemption is a solid basis for confidence. David had not known Calvary as we have done, but temporal redemption cheered him; and shall not eternal redemption yet more sweetly console us? Past deliverances are strong pleas for present assistance. What the Lord has done he will do again, for he changes not. He is a God of veracity, faithful to his promises, and gracious to his saints; he will not turn away from his people.

6. "*I have hated them that regard lying vanities.*" Those who will not lean upon the true arm of strength, are sure to make to themselves vain confidences. Man must have a god, and if he will not adore the only living and true God,

he makes a fool of himself, and pays superstitious regard to a lie, and waits with anxious hope upon a base delusion. Those who did this were none of David's friends; he had a constant dislike to them: the verb includes the present as well as the past tense. He hated them for hating God; he would not endure the presence of idolaters; his heart was set against them for their stupidity and wickedness. He had no patience with their superstitious observances, and calls their idols vanities of emptiness, nothings of nonentity. Small courtesy is more than Romanists and Puseyists deserve for their fooleries. Men who make gods of their riches, their persons, their wits, or anything else, are to be shunned by those whose faith rests upon God in Christ Jesus; and so far from being envied, they are to be pitied as depending upon utter vanities. "*But I trust in the Lord.*" This might be very unfashionable, but the psalmist dared to be singular. Bad example should not make us less decided for the truth, but the rather in the midst of general defection we should grow the more bold. This adherence to his trust in Jehovah is the great plea employed all along: the troubled one flies into the arms of his God, and ventures everything upon the divine faithfulness.

7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;
8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.

7. "*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.*" For mercy past he is grateful, and for mercy future, which he believingly anticipates, he is joyful. In our most importunate intercessions, we must find breathing time to bless the Lord: praise is never a hindrance to prayer, but rather a lively refreshment therein. It is delightful at intervals to hear the notes of the high-sounding cymbals when the dolorous sackbut rules the hour. Those two words, *glad* and *rejoice*, are an instructive reduplication, we need not stint ourselves in our holy triumph; this wine we may drink in bowls without fear of excess. "*For thou hast considered my trouble.*" Thou hast seen it, weighed it, directed it, fixed a bound to it, and in all ways made it a matter of tender consideration. A man's consideration means the full exercise of his mind; what must God's consideration be? "*Thou hast known my soul in adversities.*" God owns his saints when others are ashamed to acknowledge them; he never refuses to know his friends. He thinks not the worse of them for their rags and tatters. He does not misjudge them and cast them off when their faces are lean with sickness, or their hearts heavy with despondency. Moreover, the Lord Jesus knows us in our pangs in a peculiar sense, by having a deep sympathy towards us in them all; when no others can enter into our griefs, from want of understanding them experimentally, Jesus dives into the lowest depths with us, comprehending the direst of our woes, because he has felt the same. Jesus is a physician who knows every case; nothing is new to him. When we are so bewildered as not to know our own state, he knows us altogether. He has known us and will know us: O for grace to know more of him! "Man, know thyself," is a good philosophic precept, but "Man, thou art known of God," is a superlative consolation. *Adversities* in the plural—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous."

8. "*And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy.*" To be shut up in one's hand is to be delivered over absolutely to his power; now, the believer is not in the hand of death or the devil, much less is he in the power of man. The enemy may get a temporary advantage over us, but we are like men in prison with the door open; God will not let us be shut up, he always provides a way of escape. "*Thou hast set my feet in a large room.*" Blessed be God for liberty: civil liberty is valuable, religious liberty is precious, spiritual liberty is priceless. In all troubles we may praise God if these are left. Many saints have had their greatest enlargements of soul when their affairs have been in the greatest straits. Their souls have been in a large room when their bodies have been

lying in Bonner's coalhole, or in some other narrow dungeon. Grace has been equal to every emergency ; and more than this, it has made the emergency an opportunity for displaying itself.

9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble : mine eye is consumed with grief, *yea*, my soul and my belly.

10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing : my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance : they that did see me without fled from me.

12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind : I am like a broken vessel.

13 For I have heard the slander of many : fear *was* on every side : while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

9. "*Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble.*" Now, the man of God comes to a particular and minute description of his sorrowful case. He unbosoms his heart, lays bare his wounds, and expresses his inward desolation. This first sentence pithily comprehends all that follows, it is the text for his lamenting discourse. Misery moves mercy—no more reasoning is needed. "Have mercy" is the prayer ; the argument is as prevalent as it is plain and personal, "I am in trouble." "*Mine eye is consumed with grief.*" Dim and sunken eyes are plain indicators of failing health. Tears draw their salt from our strength, and floods of them are very apt to consume the source from which they spring. God would have us tell him the symptoms of our disease, not for his information, but to show our sense of need. "*Yea, my soul and my belly* [or *body*]." Soul and body are so intimately united, that one cannot decline without the other feeling it. We, in these days, are not strangers to the double sinking which David describes ; we have been faint with physical suffering, and distracted with mental distress : when two such seas meet, it is well for us that the Pilot at the helm is at home in the midst of the waterfloods, and makes storms to become the triumph of his art.

10. "*For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.*" It had become his daily occupation to mourn ; he spent all his days in the dungeon of distress. The sap and essence of his existence was being consumed, as a candle is wasted while it burns. His adversities were shortening his days, and digging for him an early grave. Grief is a sad market to spend all our wealth of life in, but a far more profitable trade may be driven there than in Vanity Fair ; it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting. Black is good wear. The salt of tears is a healthy medicine. Better spend our years in sighing than in sinning. The two members of the sentence before us convey the same idea ; but there are no idle words in Scripture, the reduplication is the fitting expression of fervency and importunity. "*My strength faileth because of mine iniquity.*" David sees to the bottom of his sorrow, and detects sin lurking there. It is profitable trouble which leads us to trouble ourselves about our iniquity. Was this the psalmist's foulest crime which now gnawed at his heart, and devoured his strength ? Very probably it was so. Sinful morsels, though sweet in the mouth, turn out to be poison in the bowels : if we wantonly give a portion of our strength to sin, it will by-and-by take the remainder from us. We lose both physical, mental, moral, and spiritual vigour by iniquity. "*And my bones are consumed.*" Weakness penetrated the innermost parts of his system, the firmest parts of his frame felt the general decrepitude. A man is in a piteous plight when he comes to this.

11. "*I was a reproach among all mine enemies.*" They were pleased to have something to throw at me; my mournful estate was music to them, because they maliciously interpreted it to be a judgment from heaven upon me. Reproach is little thought of by those who are not called to endure it, but he who passes under its lash knows how deep it wounds. The best of men may have the bitterest foes, and be subjected to the most cruel taunts. "*But especially among my neighbours.*" Those who are nearest can stab the sharpest. We feel most the slights of those who should have shown us sympathy. Perhaps David's friends feared to be identified with his declining fortunes, and therefore turned against him in order to win the mercy if not the favour of his opponents. Self interest rules the most of men: ties the most sacred are soon snapped by its influence, and actions of the utmost meanness are perpetrated without scruple. "*And a fear to mine acquaintance.*" The more intimate before, the more distant did they become. Our Lord was denied by Peter, betrayed by Judas, and forsaken by all in the hour of his utmost need. All the herd turn against a wounded deer. The milk of human kindness curdles when a despised believer is the victim of slanderous accusations. "*They that did see me without fled from me.*" Afraid to be seen in the company of a man so thoroughly despised, those who once courted his society hastened from him as though he had been infected with the plague. How villainous a thing is slander which can thus make an eminent saint, once the admiration of his people, to become the general butt, the universal aversion of mankind! To what extremities of dishonour may innocence be reduced!

12. "*I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind.*" All David's youthful prowess was now gone from remembrance; he had been the saviour of his country, but his services were buried in oblivion. Men soon forget the deepest obligations; popularity is evanescent to the last degree: he who is in every one's mouth to-day may be forgotten by all to-morrow. A man had better be dead than be smothered in slander. Of the dead we say nothing but good, but in the psalmist's case they said nothing but evil. We must not look for the reward of philanthropy this side of heaven, for men pay their best servants but sorry wages, and turn them out of doors when no more is to be got out of them. "*I am like a broken vessel,*" a thing useless, done for, worthless, cast aside, forgotten. Sad condition for a king! Let us see herein the portrait of the King of kings in his humiliation, when he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.

13. "*For I have heard the slander of many.*" One slanderous viper is death to all comfort—what must be the venom of a whole brood? What the ear does not hear the heart does not rue; but in David's case the accusing voices were loud enough to break in upon his quiet—foul mouths had grown so bold, that they poured forth their falsehoods in the presence of their victim. Shimei was but one of a class, and his cry of "Go up, thou bloody man," was but the common speech of thousands of the son of Belial. All Beelzebub's pack of hounds may be in full cry against a man, and yet he may be the Lord's anointed. "*Fear was on every side.*" He was encircled with fearful suggestions, threatenings, remembrances, and forebodings; no quarter was clear from incessant attack. "*While they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.*" The ungodly act in concert in their onslaughts upon the excellent of the earth: it is to be wondered at that sinners should often be better agreed than saints, and generally set about their wicked work with much more care and foresight than the righteous exhibit in holy enterprises. Observe the cruelty of a good man's foes! they will be content with nothing less than his blood—for this they plot and scheme. Better fall into the power of a lion than under the will of malicious persecutors, for the beast may spare its prey if it be fed to the full, but malice is unrelenting and cruel as a wolf. Of all fiends the most cruel is envy. How sorely was the psalmist bestead when the poisoned arrows of a thousand bows were all aimed at his life! Yet in all this his faith did not fail him, nor did his God forsake him. Here is encouragement for us.

14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD : I said, Thou *art* my God.
15 My times *are* in thy hand : deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant : save me for thy mercies' sake.
17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD ; for I have called upon thee : let the wicked be ashamed, *and* let them be silent in the grave.
18 Let the dying lips be put to silence ; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

In this section of the Psalm he renews his prayers, urging the same pleas as at first : earnest wrestlers attempt over and over again the same means of gaining their point.

14. "*But I trusted in thee, O Lord.*" Notwithstanding all afflicting circumstances, David's faith maintained its hold, and was not turned aside from its object. What a blessed saving clause is this ! So long as our faith, which is our shield, is safe, the battle may go hard, but its ultimate result is no matter of question ; if that could be torn from us, we should be as surely slain as were Saul and Jonathan upon the high places of the field. "*I said, Thou art my God.*" He proclaimed aloud his determined allegiance to Jehovah. He was no fair-weather believer, he could hold to his faith in a sharp frost, and wrap it about him as a garment fitted to keep out all the ills of time. He who can say what David did need not envy Cicero his eloquence : "Thou art my God," has more sweetness in it than any other utterance which human speech can frame. Note that this adhesive faith is here mentioned as an argument with God to honour his own promise by sending a speedy deliverance.

15. "*My times are in thy hand.*" The sovereign arbiter of destiny holds in his own power all the issues of our life ; we are not waifs and strays upon the ocean of fate, but are steered by infinite wisdom towards our desired haven. Providence is a soft pillow for anxious heads, an anodyne for care, a grave for despair. "*Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.*" It is lawful to desire escape from persecution if it be the Lord's will ; and when this may not be granted us in the form which we desire, sustaining grace will give us deliverance in another form, by enabling us to laugh to scorn all the fury of the foe.

16. "*Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.*" Give me the sunshine of heaven in my soul, and I will defy the tempests of earth. Permit me to enjoy a sense of thy favour, O Lord, and a consciousness that thou art pleased with my manner of life, and all men may frown and slander as they will. It is always enough for a servant if he pleases his master ; others may be dissatisfied, but he is not their servant, they do not pay him his wages, and their opinions have no weight with him. "*Save me for thy mercies' sake.*" The good man knows no plea but mercy ; whoever might urge legal pleas David never dreamed of it.

17. "*Let me not be ashamed, O Lord ; for I have called upon thee.*" Put not my prayers to the blush ! Do not fill profane mouths with jeers at my confidence in my God. "*Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.*" Cause them to their amazement to see my wrongs righted and their own pride horribly confounded. A milder spirit rules our prayers under the gentle reign of the Prince of Peace, and, therefore, we can only use such words as these in their prophetic sense, knowing as we do full well, that shame and the silence of death are the best portion that ungodly sinners can expect. That which they desired for despised believers shall come upon themselves by a decree of retributive justice, at which they cannot cavil—"As he loved mischief, so let it come upon him."

18. "*Let the lying lips be put to silence.*" A right good and Christian prayer; who but a bad man would give liars more license than need be? May God silence them either by leading them to repentance, by putting them to thorough shame, or by placing them in positions where what they may say will stand for nothing. "*Which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*" The sin of slanderers lies partly in the matter of their speech; "they speak grievous things;" things cutting deep into the feelings of good men, and wounding them sorely in that tender place—their reputations. The sin is further enhanced by the manner of their speech; they speak proudly and contemptuously; they talk as if they themselves were the cream of society, and the righteous the mere scum of vulgarity. Proud thoughts of self are generally attended by debasing estimates of others. The more room we take up ourselves, the less we can afford our neighbours. What wickedness it is that unworthy characters should always be the loudest in railing at good men! They have no power to appreciate moral worth of which they are utterly destitute, and yet they have the effrontery to mount the judgment seat, and judge the men compared with whom they are as so much draff. Holy indignation may well prompt us to desire anything which may rid the world of such unbearable impertinence and detestable arrogance.

19 *Oh* how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed *be* the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Being full of faith, the psalmist gives glory to God for the mercy which he is assured will be his position.

19. "*Oh how great is thy goodness.*" Is it not singular to find such a joyful sentence in connection with so much sorrow? Truly the life of faith is a miracle. When faith led David to his God, she set him singing at once. He does not tell us how great was God's goodness, for he could not; there are no measures which can set forth the immeasurable goodness of Jehovah, who is goodness itself. Holy amazement uses interjections where adjectives utterly fail. Notes of exclamation suit us when words of explanation are of no avail. If we cannot measure we can marvel; and though we may not calculate with accuracy, we can adore with fervency. "*Which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.*" The psalmist in contemplation divides goodness into two parts, that which is in store and that which is wrought out. The Lord has laid up in reserve for his people supplies beyond all count. In the treasury of the covenant, in the field of redemption, in the caskets of the promises, in the granaries of providence, the Lord has provided for all the needs which can possibly occur to his chosen. We ought often to consider the laid-up goodness of God which has not yet been distributed to the chosen, but is already provided for them: if we are much in such contemplations, we shall be led to feel devout gratitude, such as glowed in the heart of David. "*Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.*" Heavenly mercy is not all hidden in the storehouse; in a thousand ways it has already revealed itself on behalf of those who are bold to avow their confidence in God; before their fellow men this goodness of the Lord has been displayed, that a faithless

generation might stand rebuked. Overwhelming are the proofs of the Lord's favour to believers, history teems with amazing instances, and our own lives are full of prodigies of grace. We serve a good Master. Faith receives a large reward even now, but looks for her full inheritance in the future. Who would not desire to take his lot with the servants of a Master whose boundless love fills all holy minds with astonishment?

20. "*Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man.*" Pride is a barbed weapon: the proud man's contumely is iron which entereth into the soul; but those who trust in God, are safely housed in the Holy of holies, the innermost court, into which no man may dare intrude; here in the secret dwelling place of God the mind of the saint rests in peace, which the foot of pride cannot disturb. Dwellers at the foot of the cross of Christ grow callous to the sneers of the haughty. The wounds of Jesus distil a balsam which heals all the scars which the jagged weapons of contempt can inflict upon us; in fact, when armed with the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, the heart is invulnerable to all the darts of pride. "*Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*" Tongues are more to be dreaded than beasts of prey—and when they strive, it is as though a whole pack of wolves were let loose; but the believer is secure even in this peril, for the royal pavilion of the King of kings shall afford him quiet shelter and serene security. The secret tabernacle of sacrifice, and the royal pavilion of sovereignty afford a double security to the Lord's people in their worst distresses. Observe the immediate action of God, "*Thou* shalt hide," "*Thou* shalt keep," the Lord himself is personally present for the rescue of his afflicted.

21. "*Blessed be the Lord.*" When the Lord blesses us we cannot do less than bless him in return. "*For he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.*" Was this in Mahanaim, where the Lord gave him victory over the hosts of Absalom? Or did he refer to Rabbath of Ammon, where he gained signal triumphs? Or, best of all, was Jerusalem the strong city where he most experienced the astonishing kindness of his God? Gratitude is never short of subjects; her Ebenezers stand so close together as to wall up her path to heaven on both sides. Whether in cities or in hamlets our blessed Lord has revealed himself to us, we shall never forget the hallowed spots: the lonely mount of Hermon, or the village of Emmaus, or the rock of Patmos, or the wilderness of Horeb, are all alike renowned when God manifests himself to us in robes of love.

22. Confession of faults is always proper; and when we reflect upon the goodness of God, we ought to be reminded of our own errors and offences. "*For I said in my haste.*" We generally speak amiss when we are in a hurry. Hasty words are but for a moment on the tongue, but they often lie for years on the conscience. "*I am cut off from before thine eyes.*" This was an unworthy speech; but unbelief will have a corner in the heart of the firmest believer, and out of that corner it will vent many spiteful things against the Lord if the course of providence be not quite so smooth as nature might desire. No saint ever was, or ever could be, cut off from before the eyes of God, and yet no doubt many have thought so, and more than one have said so. For ever be such dark suspicions banished from our minds. "*Neverthless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*" What a mercy that if *we* believe not, yet God abideth faithful, hearing prayer even when we are labouring under doubts which dishonour his name. If we consider the hindrances in the way of our prayers, and the poor way in which we present them, it is a wonder of wonders that they ever prevail with heaven.

23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: *for* the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Verse 23.—"*O love the Lord, all ye his saints.*" A most affecting exhortation, showing clearly the deep love of the writer to his God : there is the more beauty in the expression, because it reveals love towards a smiting God, love which many waters could not quench. To bless him who gives is easy, but to cling to him who takes away is a work of grace. All the saints are benefited by the sanctified miseries of one, if they are led by earnest exhortations to love their Lord the better. If saints do not love the Lord, who will ? Love is the universal debt of all the saved family : who would wish to be exonerated from its payment ? Reasons for love are given, for believing love is not blind. "*For the Lord preserveth the faithful.*" They have to bide their time, but the recompense comes at last, and meanwhile all the cruel malice of their enemies cannot destroy them. "*And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*" This also is cause for gratitude : pride is so detestable in its acts that he who shall mete out to it its righteous due, deserves the love of all holy minds.

Verse 24.—"*Be of good courage.*" Keep up your spirit, let no craven thoughts blanch your cheek. Fear weakens, courage strengthens. Victory waits upon the banners of the brave. "*And he shall strengthen your heart.*" Power from on high shall be given in the most effectual manner by administering force to the fountain of vitality. So far from leaving us, the Lord will draw very near to us in our adversity, and put his own power into us. "*All ye that hope in the Lord.*" Every one of you, lift up your heads and sing for joy of heart. God is faithful, and does not fail even his little children who do but *hope*, wherefore then should we be afraid ?

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Verse 1.—"*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*" Let us therefore shun mistrust ; doubt is death, trust alone is life. Let us make sure that we trust the Lord, and never take our trust on trust. "*Let me never be ashamed.*" If David prays against being ashamed, let us strive against it. Lovers of Jesus should be ashamed of being ashamed.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 1.—"*Deliver me in thy righteousness.*" For supporting thy faith, mark well whereon it may safely rest ; even upon God's *righteousness*, as well as upon his mercy. On this ground did the apostle in faith expect the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8), because the Lord from whom he expected it is a righteous judge ; and the psalmist is bold to appeal to the righteousness of God. Ps. xxxv. 24. For we may be well assured that what God's goodness, grace, and mercy moved him to promise, his truth, his faithfulness, and righteousness will move him to perform.—*William Gouge.*

Verses 1, 2, 3 :—

Shadows are faithless, and the rocks are false ;
No trust in brass, no trust in marble walls ;
Poor cots are e'en as safe as princes' halls.

Great God ! there is no safety here below ;
Thou art my fortress, thou that seem'st my foe,
'Tis thou, that strik'st the stroke, must guard the blow

Thou art my God, by thee I fall or stand ;
Thy grace hath giv'n me courage to withstand
All tortures, but my conscience and thy hand.

I know thy justice is thyself ; I know,
Just God, thy very self is mercy too ;
If not to thee, where, whither shall I go ?

Francis Quarles.

Verse 2.—"*Bow down thine ear.*" Listen to my complaint. Put thy ear to my lips, that thou mayest hear all that my *feebleness* is capable of uttering. We generally put our ear near to the lips of the sick and dying that we may hear what they say. To this the text appears to allude.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—"*Deliver me speedily.*" In praying that he may be delivered *speedily* there is shown the greatness of his danger, as if he had said, All will soon be over with my life, unless God make haste to help me.—*John Calvin.*

Verses 2, 3.—"*Be thou my strong rock,*" etc. What the Lord is engaged to be unto us by covenant, we may pray and expect to find him in effect. "*Be thou my strong rock,*" saith he, "*for thou art my rock.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 3.—"*For thy name's sake.*" If merely a creature's honour, the credit of ministers, or the glory of angels were involved, man's salvation would indeed be uncertain. But every step involves the honour of God. We plead for *his name's sake.* If God should begin and not continue, or if he should carry on but not complete the work, all would admit that it was for some reason that must bring reproach on the Almighty. This can never be. God was self-moved to undertake man's salvation. His glorious name makes it certain the top-stone shall be laid in glory.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3.—"*For thy name's sake.*" On account of the fame of thy power, thy goodness, thy truth, &c. "*Lead me.*" As a shepherd an erring sheep, as a leader military bands, or as one leads another ignorant of the way. See Gen. xxiv. 27; Neh. ix. 12, 13; Ps. xxiii. 3; lxxiii. 24. Govern my counsels, my affections, and my thoughts.—*Martin Geier*, 1614—1681.

Verse 4.—"*Pull me out of the net:*" that *noted net,* as the Hebrew hath it.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 4.—"*Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me.*" By these words, he intimateth that his enemies did not only by open force come against him, but by cunning and policy attempted to circumvent him, as when they put him on, as Saul instructed them, to be the king's son-in-law, and to this end set him on to get two hundred foreskins of the Philistines for a dowry, under a pretence of good-will, seeking his ruin; and when wait also was laid for him to kill him in his house. But he trusted in God, and prayed to be delivered, if there should be any the like enterprise against him hereafter.—*John Mayer.*

Verse 4.—"*For thou art my strength.*" Omnipotence cuts the net which policy weaves. When we poor puny things are in the net, God is not. In the old fable the mouse set free the lion, here the lion liberates the mouse.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 5.—"*Into thine hand I commit my spirit.*" These were the last words of Polycarp, of Bernard, of Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of Luther, Melancthon, and many others. "Blessed are they," says Luther, "who die not only *for* the Lord, as martyrs, not only *in* the Lord, as all believers, but likewise *with* the Lord, as breathing forth their lives in these words, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit.'"—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 5.—"*Into thine hand I commit my spirit.*" These words, as they stand in the *Vulgate*, were in the highest credit among our ancestors; by whom they were used in all dangers, difficulties, and in the article of death. *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*, was used by the sick when about to expire, if they were sensible; and if not, the priest said it in their behalf. In *forms of prayer* for sick and dying persons, these words were frequently inserted in Latin, though all the rest of the prayer was English; for it was supposed there was something sovereign in the *language* itself. But let not the abuse of such words hinder their usefulness. For an ejaculation nothing can be better; and when the pious or the tempted with confidence use them, nothing can exceed their effect.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5.—"*Into thine hand I commit my spirit,*" etc. For what are the saints to commit their spirits into the hands of God by Jesus Christ?

1. That they may be safe ; *i.e.*, preserved in their passage to heaven, from all the enemies and dangers that may stand in the way. When saints die, the powers of darkness would, doubtless, if possible, hinder the ascending of their souls to God. As they are cast out of heaven, they are filled with rage to see any out of our world going thither. One thing, therefore, which the saint means in committing his spirit into the hands of God, is, that the precious *depositum* may be kept from all that wish or would attempt its ruin. And they are sure that almighty power belongs to God : and if this is engaged for their preservation, none can pluck them out of his hand. The Redeemer hath spoiled principalities and powers, and proved it by his triumphant ascension to glory ; and hath all his and the believer's enemies in a chain, so that they shall be more than conquerors in and through him. Angels, for order's sake, are sent forth to minister to them and be their guard, who will faithfully attend them their charge, till they are brought to the presence of the common Lord of both. "I know," saith the apostle, "whom I have believed ; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

2. They commit their soul into the hands of God, that they may be admitted to dwell with him, even in that presence of his where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore : where all evil is excluded, and all good present, to fill their desires, and find them matter of praise to all eternity.

3. They commit their departing spirits into the hands of God, that their bodies may be at length raised and reunited to them, and that so they may enter at last into the blessedness prepared for them that love him. . . . .

The grounds on which they may do this with comfort, *i.e.*, with lively hopes of being happy for ever, are many. To mention only two :—

1. God's interest in them, and upon the most endearing foundation, that of redemption. "*Into thine hand I commit my spirit ; for thou hast redeemed me.*"

Redeemed me from hell and the wrath to come, by giving thy Son to die for me. Lord, I am not only thy creature, but thy redeemed creature, bought with a price, saith the saint.

Redeemed me from the power of my inward corruption, and from love to it, and delight in it ; and with my consent hast drawn me to be thine, and thine for ever. *Lord, I am thine*, save me unchangeably.

2. His known faithfulness. "*Into thine hand I commit my spirit, O Lord God of truth.*" Into thine hand I commit my spirit, who hast been *a God of truth*, in performing thy promises to all thy people that are gone before me out of this world ; and has been so to me hitherto, and, I cannot doubt, wilt continue so to the end.—*Daniel Wilcox.*

Verse 5.—"*Into thine hand.*"—When those hands fail me, then am I indeed abandoned and miserable ! When they sustain and keep me, then am I safe, exalted, strong, and filled with good.

Receive me, then, O Eternal Father, for the sake of our Lord's merits and words ; for he, by his obedience and his death, hath now merited from thee everything which I do not merit of myself. Into thy hands, my Father and my God, I commend my spirit, my soul, my body, my powers, my desires. I offer up to thy hands, all ; to them I commit all that I have hitherto been, that thou mayest forgive and restore all ; my wounds, that thou mayest heal them ; my blindness, that thou mayest enlighten it ; my coldness, that thou mayest inflame it ; my wicked and erring ways, that thou mayest set me forth in the right path ; and all my evils, that thou mayest uproot them all from my soul. I commend and offer up into thy most sacred hands, O my God, what I am, which thou knowest far better than I can know, weak, wretched, wounded, fickle, blind, deaf, dumb, poor, bare of every good, nothing, yea, less than nothing, on account of my many sins, and more miserable than I can either know or express. Do thou, Lord God, receive me and make me to become what he, the divine Lamb, would have me to be. I commend, I offer up, I deliver over into thy divine hands, all my affairs, my cares, my affections, my

success, my comforts, my labours, and everything which thou knowest to be coming upon me. Direct all to thy honour and glory; teach me in all to do thy will, and in all to recognise the work of thy divine hands; to seek nothing else, and with this reflection alone to find rest and comfort in everything.

O hands of the Eternal God, who made and still preserve the heavens and earth for my sake, and who made me for yourselves, suffer me not ever to stray from you. In those hands I possess my Lamb, and all I love; in them therefore must I be also, together with him. Together with him, in these loving hands I shall sleep and rest in peace, since he in dying left me hope in them and in their infinite mercies, placed me within them, as my only and my special refuge. Since by these hands I live and am what I am, make me continually to live through them, and in them to die; in them to live in the love of our Lord, and from them only to desire and look for every good; that from them I may at last, together with the Lord, receive the crown.—*Fra Thomé de Jesu.*

Verse 5.—"*Into thine hand I commit my spirit.*"—No shadowy form of a dark destiny stands before him at the end of his career, although he must die on the cross, the countenance of his Father shines before him. He does not behold his life melting away into the gloomy floods of mortality. He commends it into the hands of his Father. It is not alone in the general spirit of humanity, that he will continue to live. He will live on in the definite personality of his own spirit, embraced by the special protection and faithfulness of his Father. Thus he does not surrender his life despondingly to death for destruction, but with triumphant consciousness to the Father for resurrection. It was the very centre of his testament: assurance of life; surrender of his life into the hand of a living Father. With loud voice he exclaimed it to the world, which will for ever and ever sink into the heathenish consciousness of death, of the fear of death, of despair of immortality and resurrection, because it for ever and ever allows the consciousness of the personality of God, and of personal union with him, to be obscured and shaken. With the heart of a lion, the dying Christ once more testified of life with an expression which was connected with the word of the Old Testament Psalm, and testified that the Spirit of eternal life was already operative, in prophetic anticipation, in the old covenant. Thus living as ever, he surrendered his life, through death, to the eternally living One. His death was the last and highest fact, the crown of his holy life.—*J. P. Lange, D.D., in "The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ,"* 1864.

Verse 5.—"*Into thine hand I commit my spirit.*"—David committed his spirit to God that he might not die, but Christ and all Christians after him, commit their spirit to God, that they may live for ever by death, and after death. This Psalm is thus connected with the twenty-second Psalm. Both of these Psalms were used by Christ on the cross. From the twenty-second he derived those bitter words of anguish, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" From the present Psalm he derived those last words of love and trust which he uttered just before his death. The Psalter was the hymn-book and prayer-book of Christ.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6.—"*I have hated.*" Holy men have strong passions, and are not so mincing and charitable towards evil doers as smooth-tongued latitudinarians would have them. He who does not hate evil does not love good. There is such a thing as a good hater.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 6.—"*They that regard lying vanities.*"—The Romanists feign miracles of the saints to make them, as they suppose, the more glorious. They say that the house wherein the Virgin Mary was when the angel Gabriel came unto her was, many hundred years after, translated, first, out of Galilee into Dalmatia, above 2,000 miles, and thence over the sea into Italy, where also it removed from one place to another, till at length it found a place where to abide, and many most miraculous cures, they say, were wrought by it, and that the very trees when it came, did bow unto it. Infinite stories they have of this nature, especially in the Legend of Saints, which they call "The Golden Legend," a

book so full of gross stuff that Ludovicus Vives, a Papist, but learned and ingenuous, with great indignation cried out, "What can be more abominable than that book?" and he wondered why they should call it "golden," when as he that wrote it was a man "of an iron mouth and of a leaden heart." And Melchior Canus, a Romish bishop, passed the same censure upon that book, and complains (as Vives also had done before him), that Laertius wrote the lives of philosophers, and Suetonius the lives of the Cæsars, more sincerely than some did the lives of the saints and martyrs.

They are most vain and superstitious in the honour which they give to the relics of the saints; as their dead bodies, or some parts of them; their bones, flesh, hair; yea, their clothes that they wore, or the like. "You may now, everywhere," saith Erasmus, "see held out for gain, Mary's milk, which they honour almost as much as Christ's consecrated body; prodigious oil; so many pieces of the cross, that if they were all gathered together a great ship would scarce carry them. Here Francis's hood set forth to view; there the innermost garment of the Virgin Mary; in one place, Anna's comb; in another place, Joseph's stocking; in another place, Thomas of Canterbury's shoe; in another place, Christ's foreskin, which, though it be a thing uncertain, they worship more religiously than Christ's whole person. Neither do they bring forth these things as things that may be tolerated, and to please the common people, but all religion almost is placed in them." *—*Christopher Cartwright.*

Verse 6.—The sense lies thus, that heathen men, when any danger or difficulty approacheth them, are solemnly wont to apply themselves to auguries and divinations, and so to false gods, to receive advice and direction from them: but doing so and observing their responses most superstitiously, they yet gain nothing at all by it. These David detests, and keeps close to God, hoping for no aid but from him.—*H. Hammond, D.D.*

Verse 7.—"*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.*"—In the midst of trouble faith will furnish matter of joy, and promise to itself gladness, especially from the memory of by-past experiences of God's mercy; as here, "*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.*" . . . . The ground of our gladness, when we have found a proof of God's kindness to us should not be in the benefit so much as in the fountain of the benefit; for this giveth us hope to drink again of the like experience from the fountain which did send forth that benefit. Therefore David says, "*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou hast considered my trouble:*"

> Man's plea to man, is, that he never more
> Will beg, and that he never begg'd before:
> Man's plea to God, is, that he did obtain
> A former suit, and, therefore sues again.
> How good a God we serve; that when we sue,
> Makes his old gifts the examples of his new!
>
> *Francis Quarles.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou hast known my soul in adversities.*" One day a person who, by the calamities of war, sickness, and other affliction, had been reduced from a state of affluence to penury, came to Gotthold in great distress. He complained that he had just met one of his former acquaintances, who was even not distantly related to him, but that he had not condescended to bow, far less to speak to him, and had turned his eyes away, and passed him as if he had been a stranger. O sir, he exclaimed with a sigh, how it pained me! I felt as if a dagger had pierced my heart! Gotthold replied, Don't think it strange at all. It is the way of the world to look high, and to pass unnoticed that which is humble and lowly. I know, however, of *One* who, though he dwelleth on high, humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth (Ps. cxiii. 5, 6),

* Erasmus, on Matthew xxiii. 5.

and of whom the royal prophet testifies: "*Thou hast known my soul in adversities.*" Yes; though we have lost our rich attire, and come to him in rags; though our forms be wasted because of grief, and waxed old (Ps. vi. 7, Luth. Ver.); though sickness and sorrow have consumed our beauty like a moth (Ps. xxxix. 11); though blushes, and tears, and dust, overspread our face (Ps. lxix. 7), he still recognises, and is not ashamed to own us. Comfort yourself with this, for what harm will it do you at last, though men disown, if God the Lord have not forgotten you?—*Christian Scriver.*

Verse 8.—He openeth and no man shutteth. Let us bless the Lord for an open door which neither men nor devils can close. We are not in man's hands yet, because we are in the hands of God; else had our feet been in the stocks and not in the large room of liberty. Our enemies, if they were as able as they are willing, would long ago have treated us as fowlers do the little birds when they enclose them in their hand.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 9.—"*Mine eye is consumed with grief.*" This expression seems to suggest that the eye really suffers under the influence of grief. There was an old idea, which still prevails amongst the uninstructed, that the eye, under extreme grief, and with a constant profuse flow of tears, might sink away and perish under the ordeal. There is no solid foundation for this idea, but there is a very serious form of disease of the eyes, well known to oculists by the title of Glaucoma, which seems to be very much influenced by mental emotions of a depressing nature. I have known many striking instances of cases in which there has been a constitutional proneness to Glaucoma, and in which some sudden grief has brought on a violent access of the disease and induced blindness of an incurable nature. In such instances the explanation seems to be somewhat as follows. It is essential to the healthy performance of the functions of the eye, that it should possess a given amount of elasticity, which again results from an exact balance between the amount of fluid within the eye, and the external fibrous case or bag that contains or encloses it. If this is disturbed, if the fluid increases unduly in quantity, and the eye becomes too hard, pain and inflammation may be suddenly induced in the interior of the eye, and sight may become rapidly extinguished. There are a special set of nerves that preside over this peculiar physical condition, and keep the eye in a proper state of elasticity; and it is a remarkable fact, that through a long life, as a rule, we find that the eye preserves this elastic state. If, however, the function of these nerves is impaired, as it may readily be under the influence of extreme grief, or any depressing agent, the eye may become suddenly hard. Until a comparatively recent date, acute Glaucoma, or sudden hardening of the eye, attended with intense pain and inflammation, caused complete and hopeless blindness; but in the present day it is capable of relief by means of an operation. The effect of grief in causing this form of blindness seems to be an explanation of the text, "*Mine eye is consumed with grief.*" *

Verses 9, 10:—

> If thou wouldst learn, not knowing how to pray,
> Add but a faith, and say as beggars say:
> *Master, I'm poor, and blind, in great distress,*
> *Hungry, and lame, and cold, and comfortless;*
> *O succour him that's gravell'd on the shelf*
> *Of pain, and want, and cannot help himself*
> *Cast down thine eye upon a wretch, and take*
> *Some pity on me for sweet Jesus' sake:*
> But hold! take heed this clause be not put in,
> *I never begged before, nor will again.*
>
> *Francis Quarles.*

* On application for information to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, as to the effect of grief upon the eye, we received the above, with much other valuable information, from GEORGE CRITCHETT, ESQ., the senior medical officer. The courtesy of this gentleman, and of the secretary of that noble institution, deserves especial mention.

Verse 10.—"*Mine iniquity:*" Italian version, "*my pains;*" because that death and all miseries are come into the world by reason of sin, the Scripture doth often confound the names of the cause and of the effects.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 10.—I find that when the saints are under trial and well humbled, little sins raise great cries in the conscience; but in prosperity, conscience is a pope that gives dispensations and great latitude to our hearts. The cross is therefore as needful as the crown is glorious.—*Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 11.—"*I was a reproach among all mine enemies.*" If anyone strives after patience and humility, he is a hypocrite. If he allows himself in the pleasures of this world, he is a glutton. If he seeks justice, he is impatient; if he seeks it not, he is a fool. If he would be prudent, he is stingy; if he would make others happy, he is dissolute. If he gives himself up to prayer, he is vainglorious. And this is the great loss of the church, that by means like these many are held back from goodness! which the psalmist lamenting says, "*I became a reproof among all mine enemies.*"—*Chrysostom, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 11.—"*They that did see me without fled from me.*" I once heard the following relation from an old man of the world, and it occurs to me, as illustrative of what we are now considering. He was at a public assembly, and saw there an individual withdrawing herself from the crowd, and going into a corner of the room. He went up to her, she was an old and intimate friend of his; he addressed himself to her—she, with a sigh, said, "Oh, I have seen many days of trouble since we last met." What does the man of the world do? Immediately he withdrew himself from his sorrow-stricken friend and hid himself in the crowd. Such is the sympathy of the world with Christ or his servants.—*Hamilton Verschoyle.*

Verse 12.—"*I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind.*" A striking instance of how the greatest princes are forgotten in death is found in the deathbed of Louis XIV. "The Louis that was, lies forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay; abandoned 'to some poor persons, and priests of the *Chapelle Ardente*,' who make haste to put him 'in two lead coffins, pouring in abundant spirits of wine.' The new Louis with his court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon: the royal tears still flow; but a word mispronounced by Monseigneur d'Artois sets them all laughing, and they weep no more."—*Thomas Carlyle in "The French Revolution."*

Verse 12.—"*I am forgotten,*" etc. As a dying man with curtains drawn, whom friends have no hope of, and therefore look off from; or rather like a dead man laid aside out of sight and out of mind altogether, and buried more in oblivion than in his grave; when the news is, "she is dead, trouble not the Master." Luke viii. 49.—*Anthony Tuckney, D.D.*, 1599—1670.

Verse 12.—"*I am like a broken vessel.*" As a vessel, how profitable soever it hath been to the owner, and how necessary for his turn, yet, when it is broken is thrown away, and regarded no longer: even so such is the state of a man forsaken of those whose friend he hath been so long as he was able to stand them in stead to be of advantage to them.—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verses 12—15:—

Forgot as those who in the grave abide,
And as a broken vessel past repair,
Slandered by many, fear on every side,
Who counsel take and would my life ensnare.

But, Lord, my hopes on thee are fixed: I said,
Thou art my God, my days are in thy hand;
Against my furious foes oppose thy aid,
And those who persecute my soul withstand.

George Sandys.

Verse 13.—"*I have heard the slander of many.*" From my very childhood, when I was first sensible of the concernments of men's souls, I was possessed with some admiration to find that everywhere the religious, godly sort of people, who did but exercise a serious care of their own and other men's salvation, were made the wonder and obloquy of the world, especially of the most vicious and flagitious men; so that they that professed the same articles of faith, the same commandments of God to be their law, and the same petitions of the Lord's prayer to be their desire, and so professed the same religion, did everywhere revile those that endeavoured to live in good earnest in what they said. I thought this was impudent hypocrisy in the ungodly, worldly sort of men—to take those for the most intolerable persons in the land who are but serious in their own religion, and do but endeavour to perform what all their enemies also vow and promise. If religion be bad, and our faith be not true, why do these men profess it? If it be true and good, why do they hate and revile them that would live in the serious practice of it, if they will not practise it themselves? But we must not expect reason when sin and sensuality have made men unreasonable.

But I must profess that since I observed the course of the world, and the concord of the word and providence of God, I took it for a notable proof of man's fall, and of the truth of the Scripture, and of the supernatural original of true sanctification, to find such a universal enmity between the holy and the serpentine seed, and to find Cain and Abel's case so ordinarily exemplified, and he that is born after the flesh persecuting him that is born after the Spirit. And methinks to this day it is a great and visible help for the confirmation of our Christian faith.—*Richard Baxter.*

Verse 13.—"*Slander.*" Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.—*William Shakspeare.*

Verse 13.—"*They took counsel together against me,*" etc. While they mangled his reputation, they did it in such a manner as that they covered their wickedness under the appearance of grave and considerate procedure, in consulting among themselves to destroy him as a man who no longer ought to be tolerated on the earth. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that his mind was wounded by so many and so sharp temptations.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 14.—"*But I trusted in thee, O Lord.*" The rendering properly is, *And I have trusted in thee*, but the Hebrew copulative particle ו, *vau, and*, is used here instead of the adversitive particle *yet*, or *nevertheless*. David, setting the steadfastness of his faith in opposition to the assaults of the temptations of which he has made mention, denies that he had ever fainted, but rather maintains, on the contrary, that he stood firm in his hope of deliverance from God. Nor does this imply that he boasted of being so magnanimous and courageous that he could not be overthrown through the infirmity of the flesh. However contrary to one another they appear, yet these things are often joined together, as they ought to be, in the same person, namely, that while he pines away with grief, and is deprived of all strength, he is nevertheless supported by so strong a hope that he ceases not to call upon God. David, therefore, was not so overwhelmed in deep sorrow, and other direful sufferings, as that the hidden light of faith could not shine inwardly in his heart; nor did he groan so much under the weighty load of his temptations, as to be prevented from arousing himself to call upon God. He struggled through many obstacles to be able to make the confession which he here makes. He next defines the manner of his faith, namely, that he reflected with himself thus—that God would never fail him nor forsake him. Let us mark his manner of speech: *I have said, Thou art my God.* In these words he intimates that he was so entirely persuaded of this truth, that God was his God, that he would not admit even a suggestion to the contrary. And until this persuasion prevails so as to take possession of our minds, we shall always waver in uncertainty. It is, however, to be observed, that this declaration is not only inward and secret—made rather in the heart

than with the tongue—but that it is directed to God himself, as to him who is the alone witness of it. Nothing is more difficult, when we see our faith derided by the whole world, than to direct our speech to God only, and to rest satisfied with this testimony which our conscience gives us, *that he is our God.* And certainly it is an undoubted proof of genuine faith, when, however fierce the waves are which beat against us, and however sore the assaults by which we are shaken, we hold fast this as a fixed principle, that we are constantly under the protection of God, and can say to him freely, *Thou art our God.—John Calvin.*

Verse 14.—"*Thou art my God.*" How much it is more worth than ten thousand mines of gold, to be able to say, God is mine! God's servant is apprehensive of it, and he seeth no defect, but this may be complete happiness to him, and therefore he delights in it, and comforts himself with it. As he did sometime who was a great courtier in King Cyrus's court, and one in favour with him; he was to bestow his daughter in marriage to a very great man, and of himself he had no great means; and therefore one said to him, O Sir, where will you have means to bestow a dowry upon your daughter proportionable to her degree? Where are your riches? He answered, What need I care, ὁπου Κυρος μοι φίλος, Cyrus is my friend. But may not we say much more, ὅπου Κυριος μοι φίλος, where the Lord is our friend, that hath those excellent and glorious attributes that cannot come short in any wants, or to make us happy, especially we being capable of it, and made proportionable.—*John Stoughton's "Righteous Man's Plea to True Happiness,"* 1640.

Verse 15.—"*My times are in thy hand.*" It is observable that when, of late years, men grew weary of the long and tedious compass in their voyages to the East Indies, and would needs try a more compendious way by the North-West passage, it ever proved unsuccessful. Thus it is that we must not use any compendious way; we may not neglect our body, nor shipwreck our health, nor anything to hasten death, because we shall gain by it. He that maketh haste (even this way) to be rich shall not be innocent; for our times are in God's hands, and therefore to his holy providence we must leave them. We have a great deal of work to do, and must not, therefore, be so greedy of our Sabbath-day, our rest, as not to be contented with our working-day, our labour. Hence it is that a composed frame of mind, like that of the apostle's (Phil. i. 21), wherein either to stay and work, or to go and rest, is the best temper of all. *Edward Reynolds, in J. Spencer's "Things New and Old."*

Verse 15.—"*My times.*" He does not use the plural number, in my opinion, without reason; but rather to mark the variety of casualties by which the life of man is usually harassed.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 15.—"*In thy hand.*" The watch hangs ticking against the wall, when every tick of the watch is a sigh, and a consciousness, alas! Poor watch! I called once to see a friend, the physician and the secretary of one of the most noble and admirable of the asylums for the insane in this country. A poor creature, with a clear, bright intelligence, only that some of its chords had become unstrung, who had usually occupied itself innocently by making or unmaking watches, had just before I called, exhibited some new, alarming symptoms, dashing one and then another upon the stone floor, and shivering them. Removed into a more safe room, I visited him with the secretary. "How came you to destroy your favourite watches, so much as you loved them, and so quiet as you are?" said my friend; and the poor patient replied, in a tone of piercing agony, "I could not bear the tick,tick, ticking, and so I dashed it on the pavement." But when the watch is able to surrender itself to the maker, to the hand holding the watch, and measuring out the moments, it becomes a sight affecting indeed, but very beautiful, very sublime. We transfer our thought from the watch to *the hand* that holds the watch. "*My times,*" "*Thy hand;*" the watch and the hour have a purpose, and are not in vain. God gives man permission to behold two things. Man can see the whole work, the plan's completeness, also the minutest work, the first step towards the plan's completeness. Nothing

is more certain, nothing are men more indisposed to perceive than this. We have to

> "*Wait* for some transcendent life,
> Reserved by God to follow this."*

To this end God's real way is made up of all the ways of our life. His hand holds all our times. "*My times;*" "*Thy hand.*" Some lives greatly differ from others. This we know; but see, some lives fulfil life's course, gain life's crown—life in their degree. This, on the contrary, others quite miss. Yet, for even human strength there must be a love meted out to rule it. It is said, there is a moon to control the tides of every sea; is there not a master power for souls? It may not always be so, apparently, in the more earthly lives, but it is so in the heavenly; not more surely does the moon sway tides than God sways souls. It does seem sometimes as if man found no adequate external power, and stands forth ordained to be a law to his own sphere; but even then his times are in the hands of God, as the pathway of a star is in the limitations of its system—as the movements of a satellite are in the forces of its planet. But while I would not pause on morbid words or views of life, so neither do I desire you to receive or charge me with giving only a moody, morbid view of the world, and an imperfect theology; but far other. "*My times are in thy hand*"—*the hand of my Saviour.*

> "I report as a man may of God's work—all's love, but all's law.
> In the Godhead I seek and I find it, and so it shall be
> A face like my face that receives thee, a Man like to me
> Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever, a hand like this hand
> Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee: *See the Christ stand!*"*

And now he is "the restorer of paths to dwell in." The hand of Jesus is the hand which rules our times. He regulates our life-clock. Christ for and Christ in us. *My* times in *his* hand. My life can be no more in vain than was my Saviour's life in vain.—*E. Paxton Hood, in* "*Dark Sayings on a Harp,*" 1865.

Verse 15.—When David had Saul at his mercy in the cave, those about him said, *This is the time* in which God will deliver thee. 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. No, saith David, the time is not come for my deliverance till it can be wrought without sin, and I will wait for that time; for it is God's time, and that is the best time.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 16.—"*Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.*" When the cloud of trouble hideth the Lord's favour, faith knoweth it may shine again, and therefore prayeth through the cloud for the dissolving of it. "*Make thy face to shine upon thy servant.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 18.—"*Lying lips . . . . which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*"—The primitive persecutors slighted the Christians for a company of bad, illiterate fellows, and therefore they used to paint the God of the Christians with an ass's head and a book in his hand, saith Tertullian; to signify, that though they pretended learning, yet they were silly and ignorant people. Bishop Jewel, in his sermon upon Luke xi. 15, cites this out of Tertullian and applies it to his times. Do not our adversaries the like, saith he, against all that profess the gospel? Oh! say they, who are those that favour this way? None but shoemakers, tailors, weavers, and such as never were at the University. These are the bishop's own words. Bishop White said in open court, that the Puritans were all a company of blockheads.—*Charles Bradbury.*

Verse 18.—"*Lying lips . . . . which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*"—In that venerable and original monument of

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* Robert Browning.

the Vaudois Church, entitled "The Golden Lesson," of the date 1100, we meet with a verse, which has been thus translated :—

"If there be any one who loves and fears Jesus Christ,
Who will not curse, nor swear, nor lie,
Nor be unchaste, nor kill, nor take what is another's,
Nor take vengeance on his enemies;
They say that he is a Vaudès, and worthy of punishment."

Antoine Monastier, in "A History of Vaudois Church," 1859.

Verse 19.—"*Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.*"—As a provident man will regulate his liberality towards all men in such a manner as not to defraud his children or family, nor impoverish his own house, by spending his substance prodigally on others; so God, in like manner, in exercising his beneficence to aliens from his family, knows well how to reserve for his own children that which belongs to them, as it were by hereditary right; that is to say, because of their adoption.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 19.—"*Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.*"—Mark the phrase "Laid up for them;" his mercy and goodness it is intended for them, as a father that lays by such a sum of money, and writes on the bag, "This is a portion for such a child." But how comes the Christian to have this right to God, and all that vast and untold treasure of happiness which is in him?" This indeed is greatly to be heeded; it is faith that gives him a good title to all this. That which maketh him a child, makes him an heir. Now, faith makes him a child of God. John i. 12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." As therefore, if you would not call your birthright into question, and bring your interest in Christ and those glorious privileges that come along with him, under a sad dispute in your soul, look to your faith.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 19.—"*How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.*"—When I reflect upon the words of thy prophet, it seems to me that he means to depict God as a father who, no doubt, keeps his children under discipline, and subjects them to the rod: but who, with all his labour and pains, still aims at nothing but to lay up for them a store which may contribute to their comfort when they have grown to maturity, and learned the prudent use of it. My Father, in this world thou hidest from thy children thy great goodness, as if it did not pertain to them. But being thy children, we may be well assured that the celestial treasure will be bestowed upon none else. For this reason, I will bear my lot with patience. But, oh! from time to time, waft to me a breath of air from the heavenly land, to refresh my sorrowful heart; I will then wait more calmly for its full fruition.—*Christian Scriver.*

Verse 19.—"*Oh how great is thy goodness.*" Let me, to set the crown on the head of the *duty of meditation*, add one thing over and above—let meditation be *carried up to admiration:* not only should we be affected, but transported, rapt up and ravished with the beauties and transcendencies of heavenly things; act meditation to admiration, endeavour the highest pitch, coming the nearest to the highest patterns, the patterns of saints and angels in heaven, whose actings are the purest, highest ecstacies and admirations. Thus were these so excellent artists in meditation, David, an high actor of admiration in meditation, as often we see it in the Psalms; so in Psalm viii. 1, 9; Psalm xxxi. 19; "*Oh how great is thy goodness,*" etc.; Psalm civ. 24; "O Lord, how manifold are thy works," etc.: and in other places David's meditation and admiration were as his harp, well tuned, and excellently played on, in rarest airs and highest strains: as the precious gold, and the curious burnishing; or the richest stone, and the exquisitest polishing and setting of it. So blessed Paul, who was a great artist in musing, acted high in admiration, his soul was very warm and flaming up in it: it was as a bird with a strong and long wing that soars and towers up aloft, and gets out of sight.—*Nathaniel Ranew.*

Verse 19.—"*Before the sons of men*," i.e., *openly*. The psalmist here perhaps refers to temporal blessings conferred on the pious, and evident to all. Some, however, have supposed the reference to be to the reward of the righteous, bestowed with the utmost publicity on the day of judgment; which better agrees with our interpretation of the former part of the verse.—*Daniel Cresswell, D.D., F.R.S.* (1776—1844), *in loc.*

Verse 19.—Believe it, Sirs, you cannot conceive what a friend you shall have of God, would you but be persuaded to enter into covenant with him, to be his, wholly his. I tell you, many that sometimes thought and did as you do now, that is, set light by Christ and hate God, and see no loveliness in him, are now quite of another mind; they would not for ten thousand worlds quit their interest in him. Oh, who dare say that he is a hard Master? Who that knows him will say that he is an unkind friend? Oh, what do poor creatures all, that they do entertain such harsh sour thoughts of God? What, do they think that there is nothing in that scripture, "*Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee*"!! Doth the psalmist speak too largely? Doth he say more than he and others could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in verse 21, that he blesseth God. These were things he could speak to, from his own personal experience; and many thousands as well as he, to whom the Lord had showed his marvellous kindness, and therefore he doth very passionately plead with the people of God to love him, and more highly to express their sense of his goodness, that the world might be encouraged also to have good thoughts of him.—*James Janeway.*

Verse 19.—Very observable is that expression of the psalmist, "*Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought before the sons of men for them that trust in thee.*" In the former clause, God's goodness is said to be *laid up;* in the latter, to be *wrought.* Goodness is laid up in the promise, wrought in the performance; and that goodness which is laid up is wrought for them that trust in God; and thus, as God's faithfulness engageth us to believe, so our faith, as it were, engageth God's faithfulness to perform the promise.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 20.—"*Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*" This our beloved God does secretly, so that no human eyes may or can see, and the ungodly do not know that a believer is, in God, and in the presence of God, so well protected, that no reproach or contempt, and no quarrelsome tongues can do him harm.—*Arndt, quoted by W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 22.—"*I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications.*" Who would have thought those prayers should ever have had any prevalency in God's ears which were mixed with so much infidelity in the petitioner's heart!—*William Secker.*

Verse 22.—"*I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*"—No, no, Christian; a prayer sent up in faith, according to the will of God, cannot be lost, though it be delayed. We may say of it, as David said of Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, that they never return empty. So David adds, "*Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*"—*John Flavel.*

Verse 22.—"*I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes,*" etc. Let us with whom it was once night, improve that morning joy that now shines upon us. Let us be continual admirers of God's grace and mercy to us. He has prevented us with his goodness, when he saw nothing in us but impatience and unbelief, when we were like Jonas in the belly of hell, his bowels yearned over us, and his power brought us safe to land. What did we to hasten his deliverance, or to obtain his mercy? If he had never come to our relief till he saw something in us to invite him, we had not yet been relieved. No more did we contribute to our restoration than we do to the rising of the sun, or the approach of day. We were like dry bones without motion, and without

strength. Ezek. xxxvii. 1—11. And we also said, that 'we were cut off for our parts, and our hope was gone, and he caused breath to enter into us, and we live.' Who is a God like to our God that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin? that retains not his anger for ever? that is slow to wrath and delights in mercy? that has been displeased with us for a moment, but gives us hope of his everlasting kindness? Oh! what love is due from us to Christ, that has pleaded for us when we ourselves had nothing to say! That has brought us out of a den of lions, and from the jaws of the roaring lion! To say, as Mrs. Sarah Wright did, "I have obtained mercy, that thought my time of mercy past for ever; I have hope of heaven, that thought I was already damned by unbelief; I said many a time, there is no hope in mine end, and I thought I saw it; I was so desperate, I cared not what became of me. Oft was I at the very brink of death and hell, even at the very gates of both, and then Christ shut them. I was as Daniel in the lion's den, and he stopt the mouth of those lions, and delivered me. The goodness of God is unsearchable; how great is the excellency of his majesty, that yet he would look upon such a one as I; that he has given me peace that was full of terror, and walked continually as amidst fire and brimstone."—*Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 22.—"*I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes:*"—*i.e.*, Thou hast quite forsaken me, and I must not expect to be looked upon or regarded by thee any more. I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul, and so be cut off before thine eyes, be ruined while thou lookest on (1 Sam. xxvii. 1). This he said in his flight (so some read it), which notes the distress of his affairs: Saul was just at his back, and ready to seize him, which made the temptation strong; *in his haste* (so we read it), which notes the disturbance and discomposure of his mind, which made the temptation surprising, so that it found him off his guard. Note, it is a common thing to speak amiss, when we speak in haste and without consideration; but what we speak amiss in haste, we must repent of at leisure, particularly that which we have spoken distrustfully of God.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 22.—"*I said in my haste.*" Sometimes a sudden passion arises, and out it goes in angry and froward words, setting all in an uproar and combustion: by-and-by our hearts recur upon us, and then we wish, "O that I had bit my tongue, and not given it such an unbridled liberty." Sometimes we break out into rash censures of those that it may be are better than ourselves, whereupon when we reflect, we are ashamed that the fools' bolt was so soon shot, and wish we had been judging ourselves when we were censuring our brethren.—*Richard Alleine.*

Verse 22.—"*Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*"—As if he had said, when I prayed with so little faith, that I, as it were, unprayed my own prayer, by concluding my case in a manner desperate; yet God pardoned my hasty spirit, and gave me that mercy which I had hardly any faith to expect; and what use doth he make of this experience, but to raise every saint's hope in a time of need? "*Be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*"—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 22.—He confesseth the great distress he was in, and how weak his faith was under the temptation; this he doth to his own shame acknowledge also, that he may give the greater glory to God. Whence learn, 1.—The faith of the godly may be slackened, and the strongest faith may sometimes show its infirmity. "*I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*" 2.—Though faith be shaken, yet it is fixed in the root, as a tree beaten by the wind keeping strong grips of good ground. Though faith seem to yield, yet it faileth not, and even when it is at the weakest, it is uttering itself in some act, as a wrestler, for here the expression of David's infirmity in faith, is directed to God, and his earnest prayer joined with it, "*I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications.*" 3.—Praying faith, how weak soever, shall not be misregarded of God; for "*nevertheless,*" saith he, "*thou heardest the voice of my supplications.*" 4.—There may be in a soul at

one time, both grief oppressing, and hope upholding; both darkness of trouble, and the light of faith; both desperately doubting, and strong griping of God's truth and goodness; both a fainting and a fighting; a seeming yielding in the fight, and yet a striving of faith against all opposition; both a foolish haste, and a settled stayedness of faith; as here, "*I said in my haste*," etc.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 22.—David vents his astonishment at the Lord's condescension in hearing his prayer. How do we wonder at the goodness of a petty man in granting our desires! How much more should we at the humility and goodness of the most sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth!—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 23.—"*O love the Lord, all ye his saints.*"—The holy psalmist in the words does, with all the warmth of an affectionate zeal, incite us to the love of God, which is the incomparably noblest passion of a reasonable mind, its brightest glory and most exquisite felicity; and it is, as appears evident from the nature of the thing, and the whole train of divine revelation, the comprehensive sum of that duty which we owe to our Maker, and the very soul which animates a religious life, that we "love the Lord with all our heart, and strength, and mind."—*William Dunlop, A.M.*, 1692—1720.

Verse 23.—"*O love the Lord, all ye his saints,*" etc.—Some few words are to be attended in the clearing of the sense. "*Saints*" here in the text is or may be read, *ye that feel mercies.* "*Faithful,*" the word is sometimes taken for *persons*, sometimes *things;* and so the Lord is said to preserve true men, and truths, faithful men, and faithfulnesses. "*He plenteously rewardeth the proud doer;*" or, the Lord rewardeth plenteously; *the Lord*, who doth wonderful things. *Plenteously* is either *in cumulum, abundè*, or *in nepotes*, as some would have it; but I would rather *commend*, than go about to *amend* translations: though I could wish some of my learned brethren's quarrelling hours were spent rather upon clearing the originals, and so conveying over pure Scripture to posterity, than in scratching others with their sharpened pens, and making cock-pits of pulpits.—*Hugh Peter's* "*Sermon preached before both Houses of Parliament, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, and the Assembly of Divines, at the last Thanksgiving Day, April 2. For the recovering of the West, and disbanding of* 5,000 *of the King's Horse, etc.*, 1645."

23. "*And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*" The next query is, *how God rewardeth the proud doer?* in which, though the Lord's proceedings be diverse, and many times his paths in the clouds, and his judgments in the deep, and the uttermost farthing shall be paid the proud doer at the great day; yet so much of his mind he hath left unto us, that even in this life he gives out something to the proud which he calls "the day of recompense," which he commonly manifests in these particulars:—1. By way of *retaliation*—for *Adoni-bezek* that would be cutting off thumbs, had his thumbs cut off. Judges i. 7. So the poor Jews that cried so loud, "Crucify him, crucify him," were so many of them crucified, that if you believe Josephus, there was not wood enough to make crosses, nor in the usual place room enough to set up the crosses when they were made. Snares are made and pits are digged by the proud for *themselves* commonly, to which the Scripture throughout gives abundant testimony. 2. By shameful *disappointments*, seldom reaping what they sow, nor eating what they catch in hunting, which is most clear in the Jewish State when Christ was amongst them. *Judas* betrays him to get money, and hardly lived long enough to spend it. *Pilate*, to please Cæsar, withstands all counsels against it, and gives way to that murder, by which he ruined both himself and Cæsar. The Jewish priests, to maintain that domination and honour (which they thought the son of Joseph and Mary stole from them) cried loud for his death, which proved a sepulchre to them and their glory. And the poor people that crucified him (through fear of the *Romans* taking their city) by his death had their gates opened to the *Romans*—yea, *Cæsar* himself, fearing a great change in his government by Christ living near

him (which to-day sets all the kingcraft in the world to work) met such a change that shortly he had neither crown nor sceptre to boast of, if you read the story of Titus and Vespasian, all which dealings of God with the proud is most elegantly set forth unto us by the psalmist. "Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made."—*Hugh Peters.*

24. "*Be of good courage.*" Christian courage may thus be described. It is the undaunted audacity of a sanctified heart in adventuring upon difficulties and undergoing hardships for a good cause upon the call of God. The *genus*, the common nature of it is an undaunted audacity. This animosity, as some phrase it, is common both unto men and to some brutes. The lion is said to be the strongest among beasts, that turneth not away from any. Prov. xxx. 30. And there is an elegant description of the war horse in regard of boldness. Job xxxix. 19, etc. And this boldness that is in brutes is spoken of as a piece of this same *courage* that God is pleased to give to men. Ezek. iii. 9. This is the Lord's promise—"As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead." The word "harder" is the same in the Hebrew that is here in my text—*fortiorem petra*—the rock that is not afraid of any weather, summer or winter, sun and showers, heat and cold, frost and snow; it blusheth not, shrinketh not, it changeth not its complexion, it is still the same. Such a like thing is *courage*, in the common nature of it. Secondly, consider the subject, it is *the heart*, the castle where courage commands and exerciseth military discipline; (shall I so say) it's within the bosom, it is the soul of a valiant soldier. Some conceive our English word *courage* to be derived from *cordis actio*, the very acting of the heart. A valiant man is described (2 Sam. xvii. 10) for to be a man whose heart is as the heart of a lion. And sometimes the original translated *courageous*, as Amos ii. 16, may most properly be rendered *a man of heart.* Beloved, valour doth not consist in a piercing eye, in a terrible look, in big words; but it consists in the mettle, the vigour that is within the bosom. Sometimes a coward may dwell at the sign of a roaring voice and of a stern countenance; whereas true fortitude may be found within his breast whose outward deportment promises little or nothing in that kind. Thirdly, note the qualification of this same subject; I said a sanctified heart; for I am not now speaking of fortitude as a moral virtue, whereof heathens that have not God are capable, and for which many among them that are not Christians, have been worthily commended. But I am now discoursing of courage as a virtue theological, as a gracious qualification, put upon the people of God by special covenant. And there are three things that do characterize it, and which do distinguish it from the moral virtue of fortitude. (1) The *root*, whence it ariseth; (2) the *rule*, whereby it is directed; (3) the *end*, to which it is referred. The *root*, whence it ariseth, is *love to God:* all the saints of God that love the Lord be of good courage. The love of Christ constraineth me to make these bold and brave adventures, saith the apostle. 2 Cor. v. 14. The *rule*, whereby it is directed, is the *word of God*—what the Lord hath pleased to leave on record for a Christian's guidance in holy pages. 1 Chron. xxii. 12, 13. "Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed." Be a man of mettle, but let thy mettle be according to my mind, according to this rule. And the *end*, to which it refers, is *God.* For every sanctified man being a self-denying and a God-advancing man, his God is his centre, wherein his actings, his undertakings rest; and his soul is not, yea, it cannot be satisfied but in God.—*Simeon Ash's "Sermon preached before the Commanders of the Military Forces of the renowned Citie of London*, 1642."

Verse 24.—"*Be of good courage.*"—Shall I hint some of the weighty services

that are charged upon all our consciences? The work of mortification, to pick out our eyes, to chop off our hands, to cut off our feet; do you think that a milk-sop, a man that is not a man of a stout spirit, will do this? Now to massacre fleshly lusts, is (as it were) for a man to mangle and dismember his own body; it is a work painful and grievous, as for a man to cut off his own feet, to chop off his own hands, and to pick out his own eyes, as Christ and the apostle Paul do express it. Besides this, there are in Christians' bosoms strongholds to be battered, fortifications to be demolished; there are high hills and mountains that must be levelled with the ground; there are trenches to be made, valleys to be filled. O beloved, I may not mention the hills that lie before us in heaven way, which we must climb up, and craggy rocks that we must get over; and without courage certainly the work put upon our hands will not be discharged. There are also the walls of Jerusalem to be repaired, and the temple to be re-edified. If Nehemiah had not been a man of a brave spirit he would never have gone through stitch with that church work, those weighty services which he did undertake. How this is applicable to us for the present time, the time of our begun reformation, I speak not, but rather do refer it to your considerations. I beseech you to read Neh. iv. 17, 18, "They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded, and he that sounded the trumpet was by me." While they were at work, they were all ready for war.—*Simeon Ash.*

Verse 24.—"*And he shall strengthen thy heart.*" Put thou thyself forth in a way of bold adventure for him, and his providence shall be sweetly exercised for thy good. A worthy commander, how careful is he of a brave blade, a man that will fight at a cannon's mouth! Doth he hear from him that a bone is broken? Send for the bone-setter. Is he like to bleed to death? Call for the surgeon; let him post away to prevent that peril. Doth he grow weaker and weaker? Is there anything in the camp that may restore his spirit? withhold nothing; nothing is too good, too costly; would he eat gold he should have it. Thus it is with God. Oh, what letters of commendation doth he give in manifestation of his own love to them in Pergamos upon this very ground. "Thou, saith the Lord, thou hast held forth my name, and not denied it, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth!" thou didst fight for Christ in the cave where the devil commanded; thou didst stand and appear for him when other men did lose heart and courage. Here is a man that God will own; such a one shall have God's heart and hand to do him honour, to yield him comfort. And therefore I appeal to your consciences, is not this courage worth the having? worth the seeking?—*Simeon Ash.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Faith expressed, confusion deprecated, deliverance sought.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—*Open avowal of faith.* 1. Duties which precede it, self-examination, etc. 2. Modes of making the confession. 3. Conduct incumbent on those who have made the profession.

Verse 1 (*last clause*).—How far the righteousness of God is involved in the salvation of a believer.

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—God's hearing prayer a great condescension.

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—How far we may be urgent with God as to time.

Verses 2, 3 (*last and first clauses*).—That which we have we may yet seek for.

Verse 3.—Work out the metaphor of God as a rocky fastness of the soul.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—1. A blessing needed, "*lead me.*" 2. A blessing obtainable. 3. An argument for its being granted, "*for thy name's sake.*"

Verse 4.—*The rescue of the ensnared.* 1. The fowlers. 2. The laying of the net. 3. The capture of the bird. 4. The cry of the captive. 5. The rescue.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—The weak one girt with omnipotence.

Verse 5.—I. Dying, in a saint's account, is a difficult work. II. The children of God, when considering themselves as dying, are chiefly concerned for their departing immortal spirits. III. Such having chosen God for their God, have abundant encouragement when dying, to commit their departing spirits into his hand, with hopes of their being safe and happy for ever with him.—*Daniel Wilcox.*

Verse 5.—The believer's requiem.

Redemption the foundation of our repose in God.

I. What we do—*commit ourselves to God.* II. What God has done—*redeemed us.*

Verse 6.—Holy detestation, as a virtue discriminated from bigotry: or, the good hater.

Verse 7.—I. An endearing attribute rejoiced in. II. An interesting experience related. III. A directly personal favour from God delighted in.

Verse 7 (*centre clause*).—*Consider* the measure, the effects, the time, the tempering, the ending, and the recompense.

Verse 7 (*last clause*).—The Lord's familiarity with his afflicted.

Verse 8.—Christian liberty, a theme for gladness.

Verse 9.—The mourner's lament.

Verse 9 (*last clauses*).—Excessive sorrow, its injurious effects on the body, the understanding, and the spiritual nature. Sin of it, cure of it.

Verses 9, 10.—The sick man's moan, a reminder to those who enjoy good health.

Verse 10.—*My strength faileth because of mine iniquity.* The weakening influence of sin.

Verse 11.—The good man evil spoken of.

Verse 12.—The world's treatment of its best friends.

Verse 14.—Faith peculiarly glorious in seasons of great trial.

The casting forth of the sheet anchor in the storm.

Verse 15.—The believer the peculiar care of providence.

Verse 15 (*first clause*).—I. The character of the earthly experience of the saints, "My times," that is, the changes I shall pass through, etc. II. The advantage of this variety. 1. Changes reveal the various aspects of the Christian character. 2. Changes strengthen the Christian character. 3. Changes lead us to admire an unchanging God. III. Comfort for all seasons. 1. This implies the changes of life are subject to the divine control. 2. That God will support his people under them. 3. And, consequently, they shall result in our being

abundantly profited. IV. The deportment which should characterise us. Courageous devotion to God in times of persecution ; resignation and contentment in times of poverty and suffering ; zeal and hope in times of labour.—*From Stems and Twigs, or Sermon Framework.*

Verse 16.—A sense of divine favour. 1. Its value. 2. How to lose it. 3. How to obtain a renewal of it. 4. How to retain it.

The heavenly servant's best reward.

Verse 16 (*last clause*).—A prayer for saints in all stages. Note its object, "*save me ;*" and its plea, "*thy mercies' sake.*" Suitable to the penitent, the sick, the doubting, the tried, the advanced believer, the dying saint.

Verse 17.—The shame and silence of the wicked in eternity.

The silence of the grave, its grave eloquence.

Verse 19.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 773. "David's Holy Wonder at the Lord's Great Goodness."

Verse 20.—The believer preserved from the sneers of arrogance by a sense of the divine presence, and kept from the bitterness of slander by the glory of the King whom he serves.

Verse 21.—*Marvellous kindness.* Marvellous that it should come to me in such a way, at such a time, in such a measure, for so long.

Verse 21.—Memorable events in life to be observed, recorded, meditated on, repeated, made the subject of gratitude, and the ground of confidence.

Verse 22.—Unbelief confessed and faithfulness adored.

The mischief of hasty speeches.

Verse 23.—An exhortation to love the Lord. 1. The matter of it, "*love the Lord.*" 2. To whom addressed, "*all ye his saints.*" 3. By whom spoken. 4. With what arguments supported, "*for the Lord preserveth,*" etc.

Verse 24.—Holy courage. Its excellences, difficulties, encouragements, and triumphs.

PSALM XXXII.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David, Maschil. *That David wrote this gloriously evangelic Psalm is proved not only by this heading, but by the words of the apostle Paul, in Romans* iv. 6, 7, 8. "*Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*" *&c. Probably his deep repentance over his great sin was followed by such blissful peace, that he was led to pour out his spirit in the soft music of this choice song. In the order of history it seems to follow the fifty-first.* Maschil *is a new title to us, and indicates that this is an instructive or didactic Psalm. The experience of one believer affords rich instruction to others, it reveals the footsteps of the flock, and so comforts and directs the weak. Perhaps it was important in this case to prefix the word, that doubting saints might not imagine the Psalm to be the peculiar utterance of a singular individual, but might appropriate it to themselves as a lesson from the Spirit of God. David promised in the fifty-first Psalm to teach transgressors the Lord's ways, and here he does it most effectually. Grotius thinks that this Psalm was meant to be sung on the annual day of the Jewish expiation, when a general confession of their sins was made.*

DIVISION.—*In our reading we have found it convenient to note the benediction of the pardoned, verses* 1, 2 ; *David's personal confession,* 3, 4, 5 ; *and the application of the case to others,* 6, 7. *The voice of God is heard by the forgiven one in* 8, 9 ; *and the Psalm then concludes with a portion for each of the two great classes of men,* 10, 11.

EXPOSITION.

BLESSED *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* covered.

2 Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.

1. "*Blessed.*" Like the sermon on the mount, this Psalm begins with beatitudes. This is the second Psalm of benediction. The first Psalm describes the result of holy blessedness, the thirty-second details the cause of it. The first pictures the tree in full growth, this depicts it in its first planting and watering. He who in the first Psalm is a reader of God's book, is here a suppliant at God's throne accepted and heard. "*Blessed is he whose trangression is forgiven.*" He is now blessed and ever shall be. Be he ever so poor, or sick, or sorrowful, he is blessed in very deed. Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness. To hear from God's own Spirit the words, "*absolvo te*" is joy unspeakable. Blessedness is not in this case ascribed to the man who has been a diligent lawkeeper, for then it would never come to us, but rather to a lawbreaker, who by grace most rich and free has been forgiven. Self-righteous Pharisees have no portion in this blessedness. Over the returning prodigal, the word of welcome is here pronounced, and the music and dancing begin. A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven, and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing. The word rendered forgiven is in the original *taken off* or *taken away*, as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed. What a lift is here ! It cost our Saviour a sweat of blood to bear our load, yea, it cost him his life to bear it quite away. Samson carried the gates of Gaza, but what was that to the weight which Jesus bore on our behalf ? "*Whose sin is covered.*" Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercy-seat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by

the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away for ever from the sight of the all-seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit! He who has once seen sin in its horrible deformity, will appreciate the happiness of seeing it no more for ever. Christ's atonement is the propitiation, the covering, the making an end of sin; where this is seen and trusted in, the soul knows itself to be now accepted in the Beloved, and therefore enjoys a conscious blessedness which is the antepast of heaven. It is clear from the text that a man may *know* that he his pardoned: where would be the blessedness of an unknown forgiveness? Clearly it is a matter of knowledge, for it is the ground of comfort.

2. "*Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*" The word blessed is in the plural, *oh, the blessednesses!* the double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight! Note the three words so often used to denote our disobedience: trangression, sin, and iniquity, are the three-headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced his barkings for ever against his own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non-imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him. Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness, be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, "Righteousness imputed without works." He is blessed indeed who has a substitute to stand for him to whose account all his debts may be set down. "*And in whose spirit there is no guile.*" He who is pardoned, has in every case been taught to deal honestly with himself, his sin, and his God. Forgiveness is no sham, and the peace which it brings is not caused by playing tricks with conscience. Self-deception and hypocrisy bring no blessedness, they may drug the soul into hell with pleasant dreams, but into the heaven of true peace they cannot conduct their victim. Free from guilt, free from guile. Those who are justified from fault are sanctified from falsehood. A liar is not a forgiven soul. Treachery, double-dealing, chicanery, dissimulation, are lineaments of the devil's children, but he who is washed from sin is truthful, honest, simple, and childlike. There can be no blessedness to tricksters with their plans, and tricks, and shuffling, and pretending: they are too much afraid of discovery to be at ease; their house is built on the volcano's brink, and eternal destruction must be their portion. Observe the three words to describe sin, and the three words to represent pardon, weigh them well, and note their meanings. (See note at the end.)

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

David now gives us his own experience: no instructor is so efficient as one who testifies to what he has personally known and felt. He writes well who like the spider spins his matter out of his own bowels.

3. "*When I kept silence.*" When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not do so, "*my bones,*" those solid pillars of my frame, the strongest portions of my bodily constitution, "*waxed old,*" began to decay with weakness, for my grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroy my vital energy. What a killing thing is sin! It is a pestilent disease! A fire in the bones! While we smother our sin it rages within, and like a gathering wound swells horribly and torments terribly. "*Through my roaring all the day long.*" He was silent as to confession, but not as to sorrow. Horror at his great guilt, drove David to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer like the

articulate speech of man, but so full of sighing and groaning, that it resembled the hoarse roaring of a wounded beast. None know the pangs of conviction but those who have endured them. The rack, the wheel, the flaming fagot are ease compared with the Tophet which a guilty conscience kindles within the breast: better suffer all the diseases which flesh is heir to, than lie under the crushing sense of the wrath of almighty God. The Spanish inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest which conscience holds within the heart.

4. "*For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.*" God's finger can crush us—what must his hand be, and that pressing heavily and continuously! Under terrors of conscience, men have little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in a cold sweat of dread. God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David. "*My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*" The sap of his soul was dried, and the body through sympathy appeared to be bereft of its needful fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life, and the flame flickered as though it would soon expire. Unconfessed transgression, like a fierce poison, dried up the fountain of the man's strength and made him like a tree blasted by the lightning, or a plant withered by the scorching heat of a tropical sun. Alas! for a poor soul when it has learned its sin but forgets its Saviour, it goes hard with it indeed. "*Selah.*" It was time to change the tune, for the notes are very low in the scale, and with such hard usage, the strings of the harp are out of order: the next verse will surely be set to another key, or will rehearse a more joyful subject.

5. "*I acknowledged my sin unto thee.*" After long lingering, the broken heart bethought itself of what it ought to have done at the first, and laid bare its bosom before the Lord. The lancet must be let into the gathering ulcer before relief can be afforded. The least thing we can do, if we would be pardoned, is to acknowledge our fault; if we are too proud for this we doubly deserve punishment. "*And mine iniquity have I not hid.*" We must confess the guilt as well as the fact of sin. It is useless to conceal it, for it is well known to God; it is beneficial to us to own it, for a full confession softens and humbles the heart. We must as far as possible unveil the secrets of the soul, dig up the hidden treasure of Achan, and by weight and measure bring out our sins. "*I said.*" This was his fixed resolution. "*I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.*" Not to my fellow men or to the high priest, but unto Jehovah; even in those days of symbol the faithful looked to God alone for deliverance from sin's intolerable load, much more now, when types and shadows have vanished at the appearance of the dawn. When the soul determines to lay low and plead guilty, absolution is near at hand; hence we read, "*And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*" Not only was the sin itself pardoned, but the iniquity of it; the virus of its guilt was put away, and that at once, so soon as the acknowledgment was made. God's pardons are deep and thorough: the knife of mercy cuts at the roots of the ill weed of sin. "*Selah.*" Another pause is needed, for the matter is not such as may be hurried over.

"Pause, my soul, adore and wonder,
Ask, O why such love to me?
Grace has put me in the number
Of the Saviour's family.
Hallelujah!
Thanks, eternal thanks, to thee."

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou *art* my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

6. "*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.*" If the psalmist means that *on account of* God's mercy others would become hopeful, his witness is true. Remarkable answers to prayer very much quicken the prayerfulness of other godly persons. Where one man finds a golden nugget others feel inclined to dig. The benefit of our experience to others should reconcile us to it. No doubt the case of David has led thousands to seek the Lord with hopeful courage who, without such an instance to cheer them, might have died in despair. Perhaps the psalmist meant *for* this favour or the like all godly souls would seek, and here, again, we can confirm his testimony, for all will draw near to God in the same manner as he did when godliness rules their heart. The mercy seat is the way to heaven for all who shall ever come there. There is, however, a set time for prayer, beyond which it will be unavailing; between the time of sin and the day of punishment mercy rules the hour, and God may be found, but when once the sentence has gone forth pleading will be useless, for the Lord will not be found by the condemned soul. O dear reader, slight not the accepted time, waste not the day of salvation. The godly pray while the Lord has promised to answer, the ungodly postpone their petitions till the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door, and then their knocking is too late. What a blessing to be led to seek the Lord before the great devouring floods leap forth from their lairs, for then when they do appear we shall be safe. "*Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" The floods shall come, and the waves shall rage, and toss themselves like Atlantic billows; whirlpools and waterspouts shall be on every hand, but the praying man shall be at a safe distance, most surely secured from every ill. David was probably most familiar with those great land-floods which fill up, with rushing torrents, the beds of rivers which at other times are almost dry: these overflowing waters often did great damage, and, as in the case of the Kishon, were sufficient to sweep away whole armies. From sudden and overwhelming disasters thus set forth in metaphor the true suppliant will certainly be held secure. He who is saved from sin has no need to fear anything else.

7. "*Thou art my hiding place.*" Terse, short sentences make up this verse, but they contain a world of meaning. Personal claims upon our God are the joy of spiritual life. To lay our hand upon the Lord with the clasp of a personal "my" is delight at its full. Observe that the same man who in the fourth verse was oppressed by the presence of God, here finds a shelter in him. See what honest confession and full forgiveness will do! The gospel of substitution makes him to be our refuge who otherwise would have been our judge. "*Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.*" Trouble shall do me no real harm when the Lord is with me, rather it shall bring me much benefit, like the file which clears away the rust, but does not destroy the metal. Observe the three tenses, we have noticed the sorrowful past, the last sentence was a joyful present, this is a cheerful future. "*Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*" What a golden sentence! The man is encircled in song, surrounded by dancing mercies, all of them proclaiming the triumphs of grace. There is no breach in the circle, it completely rings him round; on all sides he hears music. Before him hope sounds the cymbals, and behind him gratitude beats the timbrel. Right and left, above and beneath, the air resounds with joy, and all this for the very man who, a few weeks ago, was roaring all the day long. How great a change! What wonders grace has done and still can do! "*Selah.*" There was need of a pause, for love so amazing needs to be pondered, and joy so great demands quiet contemplation, since language fails to express it.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

8. "*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.*" Here the Lord is the speaker, and gives the psalmist an answer to his prayer. Our Saviour is our instructor. The Lord himself deigns to teach his children to walk in the way of integrity, his holy word and the monitions of the Holy Spirit are the directors of the believer's daily conversation. We are not pardoned that we may henceforth live after our own lusts, but that we may be educated in holiness and trained for perfection. A heavenly training is one of the covenant blessings which adoption seals to us: "All thy children shall be taught by the Lord." Practical teaching is the very best of instruction, and they are thrice happy who, although they never sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and are ignorant of Aristotle, and the ethics of the schools, have nevertheless learned to follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth. "*I will guide thee with mine eye.*" As servants take their cue from the master's eye, and a nod or a wink is all that they require, so should we obey the slightest hints of our Master, not needing thunderbolts to startle our incorrigible sluggishness, but being controlled by whispers and love-touches. The Lord is the great overseer, whose eye in providence overlooks everything. It is well for us to be the sheep of his pasture, following the guidance of his wisdom.

9. "*Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding.*" Understanding separates man from a brute—let us not act as if we were devoid of it. Men should take counsel and advice, and be ready to run where wisdom points them the way. Alas! we need to be cautioned against stupidity of heart, for we are very apt to fall into it. We who ought to be as the angels, readily become as the beasts. "*Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*" It is much to be deplored that we so often need to be severely chastened before we will obey. We ought to be as a feather in the wind, wafted readily in the breath of the Holy Spirit, but alas! we lie like motionless logs, and stir not with heaven itself in view. Those cutting bits of affliction show how hard-mouthed we are, those bridles of infirmity manifest our headstrong and wilful manners. We should not be treated like mules if there was not so much of the ass about us. If we will be fractious, we must expect to be kept in with tight rein. Oh, for grace to obey the Lord willingly, lest like the wilful servant, we are beaten with many stripes. Calvin renders the last words, "Lest they kick against thee," a version more probable and more natural, but the passage is confessedly obscure—not, however, in its general sense.

10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

10. "*Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.*" Like refractory horses and mules, they have many cuts and bruises. Here and hereafter the portion of the wicked is undesirable. Their joys are evanescent, their sorrows are multiplying and ripening. He who sows sin will reap sorrow in heavy sheaves. Sorrows of conscience, of disappointment, of terror, are the sinner's sure heritage in time, and then for ever sorrows of remorse and despair. Let those who boast of present sinful joys, remember the *shall be* of the future and take warning. "*But he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.*" Faith is here placed as the opposite of wickedness, since it is the source of virtue. Faith in God is the great charmer of life's cares, and he who possesses it, dwells in an atmosphere of grace, surrounded with the body-guard of mercies. May it be given to us of the Lord at all times to believe in the mercy of God, even when we cannot see traces of its working, for to the believer, mercy is as all surrounding as omniscience, and every thought and act of God is perfumed with it. The wicked have a hive of wasps around them, *many sorrows;* but we have a swarm of bees storing honey for us.

11. "*Be glad.*" Happiness is not only our privilege, but our duty. Truly we serve a generous God, since he makes it a part of our obedience to be joyful. How sinful are our rebellious murmurings! How natural does it seem that a man blest with forgiveness should be glad! We read of one who died at the foot of the scaffold of overjoy at the receipt of his monarch's pardon; and shall we receive the free pardon of the King of kings and yet pine in inexcusable sorrow? "*In the Lord.*" Here is the directory by which gladness is preserved from levity. We are not to be glad in sin, or to find comfort in corn, and wine, and oil, but in our God is to be the garden of our soul's delight. That there is a God and such a God, and that he is ours, ours for ever, our Father and our reconciled Lord, is matter enough for a never-ending psalm of rapturous joy. "*And rejoice, ye righteous,*" redouble your rejoicing, peal upon peal. Since God has clothed his choristers in the white garments of holiness, let them not restrain their joyful voices, but sing aloud and shout as those who find great spoil. "*And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*" Our happiness should be demonstrative; chill penury of love often represses the noble flame of joy, and men whisper their praises decorously where a hearty outburst of song would be far more natural. It is to be feared that the church of the present day, through a craving for excessive propriety, is growing too artificial; so that enquirers' cries and believers' shouts would be silenced if they were heard in our assemblies. This may be better than boisterous fanaticism, but there is as much danger in the one direction as the other. For our part, we are touched to the heart by a little sacred excess, and when godly men in their joy o'erleap the narrow bounds of decorum, we do not, like Michal, Saul's daughter, eye them with a sneering heart. Note how the pardoned are represented as upright, righteous, and without guile; a man may have many faults and yet be saved, but a false heart is everywhere the damning mark. A man of twisting, shifty ways, of a crooked, crafty nature, is not saved, and in all probability never will be; for the ground which brings forth a harvest when grace is sown in it, may be weedy and waste, but our Lord tells us it is *honest* and good ground. Our observation has been that men of double tongues and tricky ways are the least likely of all men to be saved: certainly where grace comes it restores man's mind to its perpendicular, and delivers him from being doubled up with vice, twisted with craft, or bent with dishonesty.

Reader, what a delightful Psalm! Have you, in perusing it, been able to claim a lot in the goodly land? If so, publish to others the way of salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—The term *Maschil* is prefixed to thirteen Psalms. Our translators have not ventured to do more, in the *text*, than simply print the word in English characters; in the *margin* however they render it, as the Geneva version had done before them, "to give instruction." It would be going too far to affirm that this interpretation is subject to no doubt. Some good Hebraists take exception to it; so that, perhaps, our venerable translators did well to leave it untranslated. Still the interpretation they have set down in the margin, as it is the most ancient, so it is sustained by the great preponderance of authority. It agrees remarkably with the contents of the thirty-second Psalm, which affords the earliest instance of its use, for that Psalm is pre-eminently didactic. Its scope is to instruct the convicted soul how to obtain peace with God, and be compassed about with songs of deliverance.—*William Binnie, D.D., in "The Psalms: their History, Teachings, and Use,"* 1870.

Whole Psalm.—This is a Didascalic Psalm, wherein David teacheth sinners

to repent by his doctrine, who taught them to sin by his example. This science is universal and pertaineth to all men, and which necessarily we must all learn; princes, priests, people, men, women, children, tradesmen; all, I say, must be put to this school, without which lesson all others are unprofitable. But to the point. This is a mark of a true penitent, when he hath been a stumbling block to others, to be as careful to raise them up by his repentance as he was hurtful to them by his sin; and I never think that man truly penitent who is ashamed to teach sinners repentance, by his own particular proof. The Samaritan woman, when she was converted, left her bucket at the well, entered the city, and said, "Come forth, yonder is a man who hath told me all that I have done." And our Saviour saith to St. Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." John iv. 29; Luke xxii. 32. St. Paul also after his conversion is not ashamed to call himself chiefest of all sinners, and to teach others to repent of their sins by repenting for his own. Happy, and thrice happy, is the man who can build so much as he hath cast down.—*Archibald Symson.*

Whole Psalm.—It is told of Luther that one day being asked which of all the Psalms were the best, he made answer, "*Psalmi Paulini,*" and when his friends pressed to know which these might be, he said, "The 32nd, the 51st, the 130th, and 143rd. For they all teach that the forgiveness of our sins comes, without the law and without works, to the man who believes, and therefore I call them Pauline Psalms; and David sings, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared,' this is just what Paul says, 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' (Rom. xi. 32.) Thus no man may boast of his own righteousness. That word, 'That thou mayest be feared,' dusts away all merit, and teaches us to uncover our heads before God, and confess *gratia est, non meritum: remissio, non satisfactio;* it is mere forgiveness, not merit at all."—*Luther's Table Talk.*

Whole Psalm.—Some assert that this Psalm used to be sung on the day of expiation.—*Robert Leighton.*

The Penitential Psalms.—When Galileo was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome, for asserting the Copernican System, he was enjoined, as a penance, to repeat the Seven Penitential Psalms every week for three years. This must have been intended as extorting a sort of confession from him of his guilt, and acknowledgment of the justice of his sentence; and in which there certainly was some cleverness and, indeed, humour, however adding to the iniquity (or foolishness) of the proceeding. Otherwise it is not easy to understand what idea of painfulness or punishment the good fathers could attach to a devotional exercise such as this, which, in whatever way, could only have been agreeable and consoling to their prisoner.—*M. Montague, in "The Seven Penitential Psalms in Verse . . . . with an Appendix and Notes,"* 1844.

Verse 1.—"*Blessed.*"—Or, O blessed man; or, Oh, the felicities of that man! to denote the most supreme and perfect blessedness. As the elephant, to denote its vast bulk, is spoken of in the plural number, *Behemoth.*—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 1.—Notice, this is the first Psalm, except the first of all, which begins with Blessedness. In the first Psalm we have the blessing of innocence, or rather, of him who only was innocent: here we have the blessing of repentance, as the next happiest state to that of sinlessness.—*Lorinus, in Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is the man,*" saith David, "*whose sins are pardoned,*" where he maketh remission of sins to be true felicity. Now there is no true felicity but that which is enjoyed, and felicity cannot be enjoyed unless it be felt; and it cannot be felt unless a man know himself to be in possession of it; and a man cannot know himself to be in possession of it, if he doubt whether he hath it or not; and therefore this doubting of the remission of sins is contrary to true felicity, and is nothing else but a torment of the conscience. For a man cannot doubt whether his sins be pardoned or not, but

straightway, if his conscience be not seared with a hot iron, the very thought of his sin will strike a great fear into him; for the fear of eternal death, and the horror of God's judgment will come to his remembrance, the consideration of which is most terrible.—*William Perkins.*

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*" —Get your sins hid. There is a covering of sin which proves *a curse.* Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper;" there is a *covering* it, by not confessing it, or which is worse, by denying it—Gehazi's covering—a covering of sin by a lie; and there is also a covering of sin by justifying ourselves in it. I have not done this thing; or, I did no evil in it. All these are evil coverings: he that thus covereth his sin shall not prosper. But there is a *blessed* covering of sin: forgiveness of sin is the hiding it out of sight, and that's the blessedness.—*Richard Alleine.*

Verse 1.—"*Whose transgression is forgiven.*" We may lull the soul asleep with carnal delights, but the virtue of that opium will be soon spent. All those joys are but stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret—a poor sorry peace that dares not come to the light and endure the trial; a sorry peace that is soon disturbed by a few serious and sober thoughts of God and the world to come; but when once sin is pardoned, then you have true joy indeed. "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Matt. ix. 2.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 1.—"*Forgiven.*" Holy David, in the front of this Psalm shows us wherein true happiness consists: not in beauty, honour, riches (the world's trinity), but in the forgiveness of sin. The Hebrew word to *forgive*, signifies to carry out of sight; which well agrees with that Jer. l. 20, "In those days, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." This is an incomprehensible blessing, and such as lays a foundation for all other mercies. I shall but glance at it, and lay down these five assertions about it. 1. Forgiveness is an act of God's free grace. The Greek word *to forgive*, deciphers the original of pardon; it ariseth not from anything inherent in us, but is the pure result of free grace. Isa. xliii. 25. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." When a creditor forgives a debtor, he doeth it freely. Paul cries out, "I obtained mercy." 1 Tim. i. 13. The Greek signifies, "I was be-mercied;" he who is pardoned, is all bestrewed with mercy. When the Lord pardons a sinner, he doth not pay a debt, but give a legacy. 2. God in forgiving sin, remits the guilt and penalty. Guilt cries for justice: no sooner had Adam eaten the apple, but he saw the flaming sword, and heard the curse; but in remission God doth indulge the sinner; he seems to say thus to him: Though thou art fallen into the hands of my justice, and deservest to die, yet I will absolve thee, and whatever is charged upon thee shall be discharged. 3. Forgiveness of sin is through the blood of Christ. Free grace is the impulsive cause; Christ's blood is the meritorious. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. ix. 22. Justice would be revenged either on the sinner or the surety. Every pardon is the price of blood. 4. Before sin is forgiven, it must be repented of. Therefore repentance and remission are linked together. "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." Luke xxiv. 47. Not that repentance doth in a Popish sense merit forgiveness; Christ's blood must wash our tears; but repentance is a qualification, though not a cause. He who is humbled for sin will the more value pardoning mercy. 5. God having forgiven sin, he will call it no more into remembrance. Jer. xxxi. 34. The Lord will make an act of indemnity, he will not upbraid us with former unkindnesses, or sue us with a cancelled bond. "He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Mic. vii. 19. Sin shall not be cast in as a cork which riseth up again, but as lead which sinks to the bottom. How should we all labour for this covenant blessing!—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 1.—"*Sin is covered.*" Every man that must be happy, must have something to hide and cover his sins from God's eyes; and nothing in the

world can do it, but Christ and his righteousness, typified in the ark of the covenant, whose cover was of gold, and called a propitiatory, that as it covered the tables that were within the ark, so God covers our sins against those tables. So the cloud covering the Israelites in the wilderness, signified God's covering us from the danger of our sins.—*Thomas Taylor's "David's Learning: or the Way to True Happinesse,"* 1617.

Verse 1.—"*Sin covered.*" This *covering* hath relation to some nakedness and filthiness which should be covered, even sin, which defileth us and maketh us naked. Why, saith Moses to Aaron, hast thou made the people naked? Ex. xxxii. 25. The garments of our merits are too short and cannot cover us, we have need therefore to borrow of Christ Jesus his merits and the mantle of his righteousness, that it may be unto us as a garment, and as those breeches of leather which God made unto Adam and Eve after their fall. Garments are ordained to cover our nakedness, defend us from the injury of the weather, and to adorn us. So the mediation of our Saviour serveth to cover our nakedness, that the wrath of God seize not upon us—he is that "white raiment" wherewith we should be clothed, that our filthy nakedness may not appear—to defend us against Satan—he is "mighty to save," etc.—and to be an ornament to decorate us, for he is that "*wedding garment:*" "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Rev. iii. 18; Isa. lxiii. 1; Matt. xxii. 11; Rom. xiii. 14.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 1.—The object of pardon—about which it is conversant, is set forth under divers expressions—*iniquity, transgression*, and *sin*. As in law many words of like import and signification are heaped up and put together, to make the deed and legal instrument more comprehensive and effectual. I observe it the rather, because when God proclaims his name the same words are used, Exod. xxxiv. 7, "Taking away iniquity, transgression, and sin." Well, we have seen the meaning of the expression. Why doth the holy man of God use such vigour and vehemency of inculcation. "*Blessed is the man!*" and again, "*Blessed is the man!*" Partly with respect to his own case. David knew how sweet it was to have sin pardoned; he had felt the bitterness of sin in his own soul, to the drying up of his blood, and therefore he doth express his sense of pardon in the most lively terms. And then, partly, too, with respect to those for whose use this instruction was written, that they might not look upon it as a light and trivial thing, but be thoroughly apprehensive of the worth of so great a privilege. Blessed, happy, thrice happy they who have obtained pardon of their sins, and justification by Jesus Christ.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verses 1, 2.—In these verses *four* evils are mentioned; 1.—*Transgression*, פֶּשַׁע *pesha*. 2.—*Sin*, חַטָּאָה *chataah*. 3.—*Iniquity*, עָוֹן *avon*. 4.—*Guile*, רְמִיָּה *remiyah*. The *first* signifies the *passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited*. The *second* signifies the *missing of a mark*, not doing what was commanded; but it is often taken to express *sinfulness*, or sin in the nature, producing transgression in the life. The *third* signifies *what is turned out of its proper course or situation;* anything *morally distorted* or *perverted*. *Iniquity*, what is contrary to *equity* or *justice*. The *fourth* signifies *fraud, deceit, guile, etc.* To remove these evils, *three* acts are mentioned: *forgiving, covering*, and not *imputing*. 1.—Transgression, פֶּשַׁע *pesha*, must be forgiven, נְשׂוּי *nesui*, borne away, *i.e.*, by a vicarious sacrifice; for *bearing sin*, or *bearing away sin*, always implies this. 2.—Sin, חַטָּאָה *chataah*, must be *covered*, כְּסוּי *kesui*, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight. 3.—Iniquity, עָוֹן *avon*, what is *perverse* or *distorted*, must not be imputed, לֹא יַחְשֹׁב *lo yachshobh*, must *not be reckoned to his account*. 4.—Guile, רְמִיָּה *remiyah*, must be annihilated from the soul. *In whose spirit there is no* guile. The man whose *transgression* is forgiven; whose *sin* is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose iniquity and perversion is not reckoned to his account; and whose *guile*, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin, and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verses 1, 2.—*Transgression.* Prevarication. Some understand by it sins of omission and commission.

Sin. Some understand those inward inclinations, lusts, and motions, whereby the soul swerves from the law of God, and which are the immediate cause of external sins.

Iniquity. Notes original sin, the root of all.

Levatus, forgiven, eased, signifies to take away, to bear, to carry away. Two words in Scripture are chiefly used to denote remission, to expiate, to bear or carry away: the one signifies the manner whereby it is done, namely, atonement, the other the effect of this expiation, carrying away; one notes the meritorious cause, the other the consequent.

Covered. Alluding to the covering of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Menochius thinks it alludes to the manner of writing among the Hebrews, which he thinks to be the same with that of the Romans; as writing with a pencil upon wax spread upon tables, which when they would blot out they made the wax plain, and drawing it over the writing, covered the former letters. And so it is equivalent with that expression of "blotting out sin," as in the other allusion it is with "casting sin into the depths of the sea."

Impute. Not charging upon account. As sin is a defection from the law, so it is forgiven; as it is offensive to God's holiness, so it is covered; as it is a debt involving man in a debt of punishment, so it is not imputed; they all note the certainty, and extent, and perfection of pardon: the three words expressing sin here, being the same that are used by God in the declaration of his name.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verses 1, 2, 6, 7.—Who is blessed? Not he who cloaks, conceals, confesses not his sin. As long as David was in this state he was miserable. There was guile in his spirit (2), misery in his heart, his very bones waxed old, his moisture was dried up as the drought in summer (3, 4). Who is blessed? He that is without sin, he who sins not, he who grieves no more by his sin the bosom on which he reclines. This is superlative blessedness, its highest element the happiness of heaven. To be like God, to yield implicit, ready, full, perfect obedience, the obedience of the heart, of our entire being; this is to be blessed above all blessedness. But among those who live in a world of sin, who are surrounded by sin, who are themselves sinners, who is blessed? "*He whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity;*" and especially does he feel it to be so, who can, in some degree, enter into the previous state of David's soul (3, 4). Ah, in what a wretched state was the psalmist previously to this blessedness! How must sin have darkened and deadened his spiritual faculties, to have guile in the spirit of one who could elsewhere exclaim, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me," any way of pain or grief, any way of sin which most surely leads to these. (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 34.) What a mournful condition of soul was his, who while he roared all the day long, yet kept silence before God, had no heart to open his heart unto God, was dumb before him, not in submission to his will, not in accepting the punishment of his iniquity (Lev. xxvi. 46), not in real confession, and honest, upright, and sincere acknowledgment of his iniquity to him against whom he had committed it. "*I kept silence,*" not merely I was silent, "I *kept* silence," resolutely, perseveringly; I kept it notwithstanding all the remembrance of my past mercies, notwithstanding my reproaches of conscience, and my anguish of heart. I kept it notwithstanding "*thy hand was heavy upon me day and night,*" notwithstanding "*my moisture,*" all that was spiritual in me, my vital spirit, all that was indicative of spiritual life in my soul, seemed dried up and gone. Yes, Lord, notwithstanding all this, I *kept* it. But Nathan came, thou didst send him. He was to me a messenger full of reproof, full of faithfulness, but full of love. He came with thy word, and with the word of a King there was power. I acknowledged my sin unto him, and my iniquity did I not hide, but this was little. Against thee, thee only, did I sin, and to

thee was my confession made. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, O Lord. I solemnly said that I would do so, and I did it. I confessed my transgression unto the Lord, "*and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*"

"*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.*" Behold the man who is blessed; blessed in the state of his mind, his guileless spirit, his contrite heart, the fruit of the spirit of grace; blessed in the forgiveness of a forgiving God; a forgiveness, perfect, entire, lacking nothing, signified by sin "covered," "iniquity not imputed" of the Lord; blessed in the blessings which followed it. "*Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*" Beneath the hollow of that hand which was once so heavy upon me, I can now repose. Thou art my hiding place, I dread thee no more; nay, I dwell in thee as my habitation, and my high tower, my covert, my safety, my house. Safe in thy love, whatever trouble may be my portion, and by the mouth of Nathan thy servant thou hast declared that trouble shall be my portion, I shall yet be preserved; yea, more, so fully wilt thou deliver me that I believe thou wilt encompass me so with the arms of thy mercy, as to call forth songs of grateful praise for thy gracious interposition.

Behold the blessedness of him whom God forgives! No wonder, then, that the psalmist adds, "*for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" As much as if he said, Surely after this thy gracious conduct towards *me*, all that truly love and fear thee, "*every one that is godly,*" when he hears of thy dealings with *me*, "*will pray unto thee.*" Encouraged by my example, he will not keep silence as I foolishly and sinfully did, but will confess and supplicate before thee, since thou art to be "*found,*" and hast so wondrously shown that thou art, of all that truly seek thee, since there is *the place* of finding, as I lay my hand upon the victim, and look through that victim to him the promised Seed; since there is *the time* of finding, declared in thy word, and manifested by the secret drawing of my heart to thee by thy grace; since the unwillingness is not in thee, but in thy sinning creature to come to thee; "*for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee,*" then, however deep the water-floods may be, however fierce the torrent, and headlong the stream, they shall not even come nigh unto him, much less shall they overwhelm him.— *James Harrington Evans, M.A.*, 1785—1849.

Verse 2.—"*Unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*" Aben-Ezra paraphrases it, of *whose sins God does not think*, does not regard them, so as to bring them into judgment, reckoning them as if they were not; *οὐ μὴ λογίζεται does not count or calculate them;* does not require for them the debt of punishment. To us the remission is entirely free, our Sponsor having taken upon him the whole business of paying the ransom. His suffering is our impunity, his bond our freedom, and his chastisement our peace; and therefore the prophet says, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 2.—"*In whose spirit there is no guile.*" In the saint's trouble, conscience is full of Scripture sometimes, on which it grounds its verdict, but very ill interpreted. Oh, saith the poor soul, this place is against me! "*Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*" Here, saith he, is a description of a sincere soul, to be one in whose spirit there is no guile; but I find much guile in me, therefore I am not the sincere one. Now this is a very weak, yea, false inference. By a spirit without guile, is not meant a person that hath not the least deceitfulness and hypocrisy remaining in his heart. To be without sin, and to be without guile, in this strict sense are the same—a prerogative here on earth peculiar to the Lord Christ (1 Pet. ii. 22), "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And therefore when we meet with the same phrase attributed to the saints, as to Levi, Mal. ii. 6; "Iniquity was not found in his

lips ; " and to Nathanael, John i. 47 : " Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile !" we must sense it in an inferior way, that may suit with their imperfect state here below, and not put that which was only Christ's crown on earth, and is the glorified saint's robe in heaven, on the weak Christian while militant here on earth, not only with a devil without, but with a body of sin within him. Wipe thine eyes again, poor soul, and then if thou readest such places, wherein the Spirit of God speaks so highly and hyperbolically of his saints' grace, thou shalt find he doth not assert the perfection of their grace, free from all mixture of sin, but rather to comfort poor drooping souls, and cross their misgiving hearts, which, from the presence of hypocrisy, are ready to overlook their sincerity as none at all, he expresseth his high esteem of their little grace, by speaking of it as if it were perfect, and their hypocrisy none at all.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—"*In whose spirit there is no guile.*" When once pardon is realised, the believer has courage to be truthful before God : he can afford to have done with *guile* in the spirit. Who would not declare all his debts when they are certain to be discharged by another ? Who would not declare his malady when he was sure of a cure ? True faith knows not only that "*guile*" before God is impossible, but also that it is no longer necessary. The believer has nothing to conceal : he sees himself as before God, stripped, and laid open, and bare ; and if he has learned to see himself as he is, so also has he learned to see God as he reveals himself. There is no guile in the spirit of one who is justified by faith ; because in the act of justification truth has been established in his inward parts. There is no guile in the spirit of him who sees the truth of himself in the light of the truth of God. For the truth of God shows him at once that in Christ he is perfectly righteous before God, and in himself he is the chief of sinners. Such a one knows he is not his own, for he is bought with a price, and therefore he is to glorify God. There is no guile in the spirit of him whose real object is to glorify Christ and not himself. But when a man is not quite true to Christ, and has not quite ceased to magnify self, there may be guile, for he will be more occupied with thoughts about himself than with the honour of Christ. But if the truth, and honour, and glory of Christ be his supreme care, he may leave himself out of the question, and, like Christ, " O commit himself to him that judgeth righteously."—*J. W. Reeve, M.A., in "Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm,"* 1860.

Verse 2.—"*No guile.*" Sincerity is that property to which pardoning mercy is annexed. True, indeed, it is that Christ covers all our sins and failings ; but it is only the sincere soul over which he will cast his skirt. "*Blessed is he whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*" None will doubt this ; but which is the man ? The next words tell us his name ; "*And in whose spirit there is no guile.*" Christ's righteousness is the garment which covers the nakedness and shame of our unrighteousness ; faith the grace that puts this garment on ; but what faith ? None but the faith unfeigned, as Paul calls it. 2 Tim. i. 5. " Here is water," said the eunuch, " what doth hinder me to be baptized ?" Acts viii. 36. Now mark Philip's answer, ver. 37, " If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest ;" as if he had said, Nothing but an hypocritical heart can hinder thee. It is the false heart only that finds the door of mercy shut.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—"*Guile.*" The guile of the spirit is an inward corruption in the soul of man, whereby he dealeth deceitfully with himself before God in the matter of salvation.—*Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 3.—"*My bones waxed old.*" God sporteth not at the sins of his elect, but outwardly doth deal with them more hardly, and chastise them more rigorously than he doth the reprobate. David's troubles and pains were partly external, partly internal : external I call those that were cast on his body ; internal upon his conscience. And in the body there were torments and vexations, seizing sometimes on his flesh—which was less painful—sometimes

on his bones, which was more grievous, yea, almost intolerable, as experience teacheth. And this is God's just recompence; when we bestow our strength on sin, God abateth it, and so weakeneth us. Samson spent his strength on Delilah, but to what weakness was he brought! Let us, therefore, learn, that God hath given us bones and the strength thereof for another use, that is, to serve him, and not waste or be prodigal of them in the devil's service.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 3.—"*My bones waxed old.*" By bones, the strength of the body, the inward strength and vigour of the soul is meant. The conscience of sin, and the terror of judgment doth break the heart of a true penitent, so long as he beholdeth his sin deserving death, his judge ready to pronounce the sentence of it, hell open to receive him for it, and the evil angels, God's executioners, at hand to hurry him to it.—*Samuel Page, in* "*David's Broken Heart,*" 1646.

Verse 3.—"*My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*" David here not only mourns for sin as a man, but he roars, as it were, like a pained beast. He seems fitter for a wilderness to cry out, than for a secret chamber to weep in; at other times he can "water his couch" in the night, now he "*roars*" all the day long; at other times "his *moisture* is dried," now his "*bones,*" the pillars of his house shake and wax old.—*Alexander Carmichael,* 1677.

Verse 4.—"*Thy hand.*" A *correcting* hand, whereby God scourgeth and buffeteth his own children. Now the sense of God's power punishing or correcting, is called God's hand, as 1 Sam. v. 11. The hand of God was sore at Ekron, because of the ark; and a *heavy* hand in resemblance, because when men smite they lay their hand heavier than ordinary. Hence, we may note three points of doctrine: first, that all afflictions are God's hand; secondly, that God lays his hand heavily often upon his dear children; thirdly, that God often continues his heavy hand night and day on them.—*Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 4.—"*My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*" Another meaning may be attributed to these words. We may suppose the psalmist to be referring to *spiritual drought.*—*Charles H. Bingham, B.A., in* "*Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm,*" 1836.

Verse 4.—"*My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*" The summer is from the middle of August to the middle of November. The intensity of the heat is great, and almost intolerable. . . . Up to the beginning or middle of September there are no showers, rain being as scarce in summer as snow. . . . The dry grass of the fields sometimes takes fire, and produces desolating conflagrations, and the parched earth is cleft and broken into chasms.—*John Eadie, D.D., LL.D., in Biblical Cyclopædia,* 1868.

Verse 4.—"*The drought of summer.*" Dr. Russell, in his account of the weather at Aleppo, which very much resembles that of Judæa, says that the verdure of the spring fades before the middle of May, and before the end of that month the whole country puts on so parched and barren an aspect that one would scarce think it capable of producing anything, there being but very few plants that have vigour enough to resist the extreme heat.—*Thomas Harmer's* "*Observations,*" 1775.

Verse 4.—"*The drought of summer.*" During the twelve years from 1846 to 1859 only two slight showers fell in Jerusalem between the months of May and October. One fell in July, 1858, another in June, 1859.—*Dr. Whitty's* "*Water Supply of Jerusalem,*" *quoted in Kitto's Cyclopædia.*

Verse 4.—If God striketh those so sore whom he favoureth, how sharply and sore will he strike them whom he favoureth not.—*Gregory.*

Verses 4, 5.—If our offences have been not gnats, but camels, our sorrow must be not a drop, but an ocean. Scarlet sins call for bloody tears; and if Peter sin heinously he must weep bitterly. If, then, thy former life hath been

a cord of iniquity, twisted with many threads, a writing full of great blots, a course spotted with various and grievous sins, multiply thy confessions and enlarge thy humiliation; double thy fastings and treble thy prayers; pour out thy tears, and fetch deep sighs; in a word, iterate and aggravate thy acknowledgments, though yet, as the apostle saith in another case, I say in this, "Grieve not as without hope," that upon thy sincere and suitable repentance divine goodness will forgive thee thy sins.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 5.—"*Selah.*" See Vol. I., pp. 25,29, 346,352; and Vol. II., pp. 249—252.

Verse 5.—"*I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.*" The godly man is ingenuous in laying open his sins. The hypocrite doth vail and smother his sin; he doth not *abscindere peccatum*, but *abscondere;* like a patient that hath some loathsome disease in his body, he will rather die than confess his disease; but a godly man's sincerity is seen in this—he will confess and shame himself for sin. "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly." 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. Nay, a child of God will confess sin in particular; an unsound Christian will confess sin by wholesale; he will acknowledge he is a sinner in general, whereas David doth, as it were, point with his finger to the sore: "I have done this evil" (Psalm li. 4); he doth not say I have done evil, but this evil. He points at his blood-guiltiness.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 5.—"*I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*" Be thine own accuser in the free confession of thy sins. *Peccavi pater* (as the prodigal child), "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." For it fares not in the court of heaven as it doth in our earthly tribunals. With men a free confession makes way for a condemnation; but with God, the more a sinner bemoans his offence the more he extenuates the anger of his Judge. Sin cannot but call for justice, as it is an offence against God; yet, when once 'tis a wound to the soul it moveth him to mercy and clemency. Wherefore, as David having but resolved to confess his sins, was accosted eftsoon with an absolution: so, *Tu agnosce, et Dominus ignoscet.** Be thou unfeigned in confessing, and God will be faithful in forgiving. 1 John i. 9. Only let *confessio peccati* be *professio desinendi* †—the acknowledgment of thy sin an obligation to leave it; and then thou mayst build upon it. "He that confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy." Prov. xxviii.13. *Isaac Craven's Sermon at Paul's Cross*, 1630.

Verse 5.—"*I said, I will confess,*" etc. Justified persons, who have their sins forgiven, are yet bound to confess sin to God. . . . There are many queries to be dispatched in the handling of this point. The first query is, what are the reasons why persons justified and pardoned are yet bound to make confession of sin unto God in private? The reasons are six. First, they are to confess sin unto God because holy confession gives a great deal of ease and holy quiet unto the mind of a sinner: concealed and indulged guilt contracts horror and dread on the conscience. Secondly, because God loves to hear the complaints and the confessions of his own people. Lying on the face is the best gesture, and the mourning weed the best garment that God is well pleased with. A third reason is, because confession of sin doth help to quicken the heart to strong and earnest supplication to God (see verse 6). Confession is to the soul as the whetstone is to the knife, that sharpens it and puts an edge on it; so doth confession of sin. Confessing thy evils to God doth sharpen and put an edge on thy supplication; that man will pray but faintly that doth confess sin but slightly. A fourth reason is, because confession of sin will work a holy contrition and a godly sorrow in the heart. (Psalm xxxviii. 18.) Declaration doth work compunction. Confession of sin is but the causing of sin to recoil on the conscience, which causeth blushing and shame of face, and grief of heart. A fifth reason is, because secret confession of sin doth give a great deal of glory to God. It gives glory to God's justice. I do confess sin, and do confess God in

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* Augustine. † Hilary.

justice may damn me for my sin. It gives glory to God's mercy. I confess sin, yet mercy may save me. It gives glory to God's omnisciency. In confessing sin I do acknowledge that God knoweth my sin. A sixth reason why justified persons must confess sin unto God is, because holy confession of sin will embitter sin, and endear Christ to them, when a man shall let sin recoil on his conscience by a confession.—*Condensed from Christopher Love's "Soul's Cordiall,"* 1683.

Verse 5.—"*I said, I will confess . . . . and thou forgavest.*" It remaineth as a truth, remission is undoubtedly annexed to confession. *Tantum valent tres syllabæ* PEC-CA-VI, saith St. Austin, of so great force are those three syllables in the Latin, three words in the English, when uttered with a contrite heart, "*I have sinned.*"—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 5.—"*Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*" This sin seems very probably to have been his adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah. Now David, to make the pardoning mercy of God more illustrious, saith he did not only forgive his *sin*, but the *iniquity* of his sin; and what was that? Surely the worst that can be said of that, his complicated sin, is that there was so much hypocrisy in it, he wofully juggled with God and man in it; this, I do not doubt to say, was *the iniquity* of his sin, and put a colour deeper on it than the blood which he shed. And the rather—I lay the accent there—because God himself, when he would set out the heinousness of this sin, seems to do it rather from the hypocrisy in the fact than the fact itself, as appears by the testimony given this holy man (1 Kings xv. 5): "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." Were there not other false steps which David took beside this? Doth the Spirit of God, by excepting this, declare his approbation of all that else he ever did? No, sure the Spirit of God records other sins that escaped this eminent servant of the Lord; but all those are drowned here, and this mentioned is the only stain of his life. But why? Surely because there appeared less sincerity, yea, more hypocrisy in this one sin than in all his others put together; though David in them was wrong as to the matter of his actions, yet his heart was more right in the manner of committing them. But here his sincerity was sadly wounded, though not to the total destruction of the habit, yet to lay it in a long swoon, as to any actings thereof. And truly the wound went very deep when that grace was stabbed in which did run the life blood of all the rest. We see, then, God hath reason, though his mercy prompted him, yea, his covenant obliged him, not to let his child die of this wound, yet so to heal it that a scar might remain upon the place, a mark upon the sin, whereby others might know how odious hypocrisy is to God.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 5.—"*Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*" We must observe the *matter forgiven*, and the *manner of forgiving*. The matter forgiven is the *iniquity of his sin*. It is disputed what is here meant by *iniquity*, whether *culpa* or *pœna*. Some understand *pœnam*, and think that an allusion is made in this word unto the message of Nathan, wherein God doth remit the heaviest stroke of his wrath, but yet retains some part in punishing the child, and permitting Absalom to rebel and abuse king David's concubines: so Theodoret, *Deus non condigna pœna Davidem punivit.* Some understand *culpam*, and will have this phrase to be an amplification of that, as if *superbia defendens*, or *taciturnitas celans*, or *impietas contra Deum assurgens*, or some such great guilt were meant by this phrase. But as I do not censure these opinions, which may well stand, so I think the phrase looks back into that word which was in the *confession*. The sin confessed was פֶּשַׁע and this is but an analysis of this word; for חַטָּאתִי עָוֹן, what is it, word for word, but the *perverseness of my aberration?* חַטָּאָה is an aberration from the scope or mark whereat we aim; all men aim at felicity, but most men stray from it, because they are not led by the law that guides unto it, the violating whereof is called חַטָּאָה. But some do stray out of mere ignorance, and they only break the law; some out of stubbornness, which

will not submit themselves to the Lawgiver; these men's sin is called *perverseness*, which God is said here to forgive. So that David did not confess more against himself than God includes in his pardon. Well may God exceed our desire; he never doth come short thereof if it do concern our spiritual, our eternal good. As he doth exclude no sinner that doth confess, so doth he except against no sin that is confessed.—*Arthur Lake.*

Verse 6.—"*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found*," etc. Seeing he is such a God, who should refuse or delay his return! Surely every rational and pious mind will, without delay, invoke so gentle and mild a Lord; *will pray to him while he is exorable*, or, as the Hebrew expresses it, *in a time of finding*. For he who promises pardon, does not promise to-morrow. There are *tempora fandi*—certain times in which he may be spoken with, and a certain appointed day of pardon and of grace, which if a man by stupid perverseness despise, or by sloth neglect, surely he is justly overwhelmed with eternal might and misery, and must necessarily perish by the deluge of divine wrath; since he has contemned and derided that Ark of salvation which was prepared, and in which whoever enters into it shall be safe, while the world is perishing.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 6.—"*For this shall every one that is godly pray to thee*," saith David. "*For this!*" What? Because of his sins. And who? Not the wickedest, but the "*godly*," in this respect, have cause to pray. And for what should he pray? Surely, for renewed pardon, for increase of grace, and for the perfection of glory. We cannot say we have no sin. Oh, then, let us pray with David, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" Where there is a double emphasis observable, it is not *ab hoste*, but *a servo*. Though God's servant, yet he would not have God to enter into judgment with him. And again, *ne intres*, it is the very entrance into judgment that he dreads and prayeth against; not only do not *proceed*, but do not so much as *enter*.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 6.—"*For this shall every one that is godly.*" We are here furnished with a fact which does not appear in the history of David. It is commonly supposed that after his grievous fall, till Nathan reproved him, he had been careless and stupefied; and this has often been adduced as a proof of the hardening nature of sin. But the thing was far otherwise. He was all the while tortured in his mind, yet unwilling to humble himself before God, and condemn himself before men, as he ought to have done. He kept silence, and endeavoured to pass off the distress by time, palliation, and excuse. But the repression and concealment of his anguish preyed not only upon his peace, but his health, and endangered life itself. At length he was reduced to the deepest penitence, and threw himself, by an unqualified confession, on the compassion of God. "*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee.*" Here we see not only that all the godly pray, but every one of them prays for pardon. This is the very thing which our Saviour teaches his disciples: "When ye pray, say, Forgive us our trespasses." And this praying does not only regard the manifestation of forgiving mercy, as some would have it, but the exercise of it.—*William Jay.*

Verse 6.—"*Godly.*" A godly man is like God, he hath the same judgment with God! he thinks of things as God doth; he hath a God-like disposition; he partakes of the divine nature. 2 Peter i. 4. A godly man doth bear God's name and image: godliness is Godlikeness.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 6.—"*A time.*" There be seasons, which, if taken, sweeten actions, and open the door for their better entertainment: Prov. xxv. 11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver;" the Hebrew is, A word spoken upon its wheels: fit times and seasons are wheels to carry words with great advantage. And so for actions; when things are done in due time they are beautiful, acceptable. When God gives rain to a land in season, how acceptable is it! when a tree bears fruit in its season, it is grateful: so when angels or men do things seasonably, it is pleasing to the Lord Christ: there are fit times, which, if we miss, actions are unlovely, and miss of their aims. "*For this shall*

every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found." There are times, if we have the wisdom to discern them, when prayer will be seasonable, acceptable, effectual.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 6.—"*Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" The effects of prayer heretofore have been wonderful. Prayer hath sent down hailstones from heaven to overcome five kings with their armies. Prayer hath shut up the windows of heaven that it should not rain, and again hath opened them that the earth might give her increase. Prayer hath stayed the swift course of the sun and caused it to go backward fifteen degrees. Prayer hath held God's hands that he could not strike when he was ready to plague his people. Prayer without any other help or means hath thrown down the strong walls of Jericho. Prayer hath divided the sea that the floods thereof could not come near the Israelites. In this place it delivereth the faithful man from all the dangers of this world. "*Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" The sum is this, That no calamity of this world, no troubles of this life, no terrors of death, no guiltiness of sin, can be so great, but that a "*godly*" man by means of his faith and felicity in Christ shall wade out of them well enough. For howsoever other things go, still he shall have such a solace in his soul, such a comfort in his conscience, such a heaven in his heart, knowing himself reconciled to God and justified by faith, that "*Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" Which, that it may better appear, I shall desire you to observe two things, the danger, the deliverance. The danger is in these words, "*In the floods of many waters;*" where the tribulations that the godly man is subject to in this life are likened, first, to *waters;* then to *many* waters; thirdly, to a *flood* of many waters. The deliverance is in these words, "*Surely they shall not come near him;*" where the deliverance of the godly man hath three degrees also. First, "they shall not come *near;*" secondly, *him*, "they shall not come near *him;*" then, *surely*—"*surely* they shall not come near him."—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 6.—"*The floods of great waters.*" The afflictions of the faithful are likened to *waters.* Fire and water have no mercy, we say. But of the two water is the worst. For any fire may be quenched with water; but the force of water, if it begins to be violent, cannot by any power of man be resisted. But these our tribulations which are "*waters*" are "*many* waters." Our common proverb is, "Seldom comes sorrow alone:" but as waters come rolling and waving many together, so the miseries of this life.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 6.—"*Floods of great waters.*"—Unfamiliar with the sudden flooding of thirsty water-courses, we seldom comprehend the full force of some of the most striking images in the Old and New Testaments.—*W. J. Conybeare, and J. S. Howson, in "Life and Epistles of St. Paul."*

Verse 6.—*In the floods*, etc.—Washed he may be, as Paul was in the shipwreck, but not drowned with those floods of great waters: be they never so great they are bounded.—*Joseph Trapp.*

Verse 6.—"*Him.*" This word must in no case be omitted; it helpeth us to answer a very strong objection. For it may be said, Many holy men have lost their goods, have suffered great torments in their body, have been troubled also in mind; how then did not the "floods of many waters" come near them? The word "*him*" helps us to answer. The very philosophers themselves reckoned their goods pertained no more to them, than, be it spoken with reverence and regard, the parings of their nails. Zenon hearing news he had lost all he had by sea, said only thus, Thou hast done very well, Fortune, to leave me nothing but my cloak. Another, called Anaxarchus, when as Nicocreon the tyrant commanded he should be beaten to death in a mortar, spake thus to the executioner, Beat and bray as long as thou wilt Anaxarchus his bag or satchel (so he called his own body), but Anaxarchus thou canst not touch. Yet these, making so small reckoning of their goods and body, set their mind notwithstanding at a high rate. The mind of a man is himself, say they. Hence it is

that Julius Cæsar, when Amyclas the pilot was greatly afraid of the tempest, spake to him thus: What meanest thou to fear, base fellow? dost thou not know thou carriest Cæsar with thee? As if he should say, Cæsar's body may well be drowned, as any other man's may; but his mind, his magnanimity, his valour, his fortitude, can never be drowned. Thus far went philosophy; but divinity goeth a degree further. For philosophy defineth *him*, that is, a man, by his reason, and the moral virtues of the mind; but divinity defineth a Christian man by his faith, and his conjunction thereby with Christ. Excellently saith Saint Austin: Whence comes it that the soul dieth? Because faith is not in it. Whence that the body dieth? Because a soul is not in it. Therefore the soul of thy soul is faith. So that if we would know what is a faithful man, we must define him, not by his natural soul, as he is reasonable, but by the soul of his soul, which is his faith. And then we easily answer the objection, that a flood may come near a faithful man's goods, near his body, near his reasonable soul; but to his faith, that is, to HIM, it can never come near.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 6.—Few verses in the Psalms are harder to be understood than this: and none has given rise to more varied expositions among the commentators. "*For this.*" Some will have it: encouraged by this example, that after so foul a fall God so readily forgave. Others again: "*for this,*" namely, warned by this example, they who are holy shall make their prayers that they may not be permitted to fall as David did. Whichever be the sense, they well argue from this passage, that the state of absolute and enduring perfection is impossible to a Christian in this life.—*Lorinus, and Cajetan* (1469—1534), *quoted by Neale.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou art my hiding place.*" David does not say, "Thou art a hiding-place" merely, as one among many; or *the* "hiding-place," as the only one; but, "Thou art *my* hiding-place." *There* lies all the excellency of the text. "He is *mine;* I have embraced the offer of his salvation," says David; "I have applied to him in my own person: I have, as a sinner, taken shelter in his love and compassion; I have placed myself under his wings; I have covered myself with the robe of his righteousness; and now, therefore, I am safe. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." This is having a part and a lot in the matter, having the personal and individual benefit of the Saviour's work of atonement. How different is an *appropriating* from a *speculative* faith! Men tell us that they believe the doctrine, that they acknowledge the truth, that they assent to our creed; and they say, that to declare to them the character of Christ as the sinner's only help and safety, is merely putting before them what they already know. Now, follow up the idea suggested by the figure in our text, and see the folly and danger of acting thus. Suppose a traveller upon a bleak and exposed heath to be alarmed by the approach of a storm. He looks out for shelter. But if his eye discern a place to hide him from the storm, does he stand still and say, "I see there *is* a shelter, and therefore I may remain where I am"? Does he not betake himself to it? Does he not run, in order to escape the stormy wind and tempest? It was a "hiding-place" before; but it was *his* hiding-place only when he ran into it, and was safe. Had he not gone into it, though it might have been a protection to a thousand other travellers who resorted there, to him it would have been as if no such place existed. Who does not see at once, from this simple illustration, that the blessings of the gospel are such only in their being *appropriated to* the soul? The physician can cure only by being *applied to;* the medicine can heal only by being *taken;* money can enrich only by being *possessed;* and the merchantman in the parable would have been none the wealthier for discovering that there was a "pearl of great price," had he not made it *his.* So with the salvation of the gospel: if Christ is the "Balm in Gilead," *apply* the remedy; if he is the "physician there," go to him; if he is the "pearl of great price," sell all that you have and *buy* it; and if he is the "hiding-place," *run into* it and be safe; there will be no solid joy and peace in the mind until he is *your* "hiding-place."—*Fountain Elwin,* 1842.

Verse 7.—"*Thou art my hiding place.*" An allusion, probably, to the *city of refuge.—Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7.—"*Hiding place.*" Kirke White has a beautiful hymn upon this word, beginning, "Awake, sweet harp of Judah, wake." We have no room to quote it, but it will be found in "Our Own Hymn Book," No. 381.

Verse 7.—"*Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.*" If we content ourselves with that word which our translators have chosen here, "*trouble*," we must rest in one of these two senses; either that God shall arm, and indue those that are his with such a constancy, as those things that trouble others shall not trouble them; but, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in them, so their consolation also aboundeth by Christ:" "As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. i. 5; vi. 9); for God uses both these ways in the behalf of his servants—sometimes to suspend the working of that that should work their torment, as he suspended the rage of the lions for Daniel, and the heat of the fire in the furnace for the others; sometimes by imprinting a holy stupefaction and insensibleness in the person that suffers; so St. Laurence was not only patient, but merry and facetious when he lay broiling upon the fire, and so we read of many other martyrs that have been less moved, less affected with their torments than their executioners or their persecutors have been. That which troubled others never troubled them; or else the phrase must have this sense, that though they be troubled with their troubles, though God submit them so far to the common condition of men, that they be sensible of them, yet he shall preserve them from that trouble so as that it shall never overthrow them, never sink them into a dejection of spirit, or diffidence in his mercy! they shall find storms, but a stout and strong ship under foot; they shall feel thunder and lightning, but garlands of triumphant bays shall preserve them; they shall be trodden into earth with scorns and contempts, but yet as seed is buried, to multiply to more. So far this word of our translators assists our devotion, "*Thou shalt preserve me from trouble*," thou shalt make me insensible of it, or thou shalt make me victorious in it.—*John Donne.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*" In these words the prophet David riseth up by a gradation, and goeth beyond that which he had formerly said concerning his confidence in God. First, he had said that God was his *hiding-place;* secondly, that he would *preserve him in trouble;* and now, thirdly, that the Lord would make him *joyful*, and to triumph over his troubles and enemies, by compassing him, instead of troubles, with mercies. . . . . Learn to acknowledge God's goodness to thyself with particular application, as David saith here, "Thou shalt compass *me* about with songs of deliverance." Not only confess his goodness to others, as to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; nor only his deliverance of Noah, Daniel, Lot; but also his mercies to and deliverance of thyself, as Paul did: "Christ gave himself for *me*, and died for *me*." Gal. ii. 20. This will exceedingly whet up thankfulness; whereas only to acknowledge God good in himself, or to others, and not to thyself, will make thee murmur and repine.—*Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou shalt compass me about.*" This word importeth, that as we are besieged on every side with troubles, so we are compassed with as many comforts and deliverances; as our crosses grow daily, so our consolations are augmented day by day. We are on every side offended and on every side defended; therefore we ought on every side to sound God's praise, as David saith, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me." Ps. ciii. 1.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 7.—"*Songs of deliverance.*" In that he will not be content only with thanks, but also will have them conjoined with "*songs*," he letteth us see how high all the strings of his heart are bended that he cannot contain himself for the mercies of God to his church, and for his manifold deliverances for the same. Many sing praises to God with an half-open mouth; and, albeit, they

can sing aloud any filthy ballad in their house, they make the mean, I warrant you, in the church, that scarce can they hear the sound of their own voice. I think they be ashamed to proclaim and show forth God's praises, or they fear to deafen God by their loud singing ; but David bended all his forces within and without to praise his God.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 8.—"*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.*" No other than God himself can undertake so much as is promised in the text. For here is faith, a rectifying of the understanding, "*I will instruct thee,*" and in the original there is somewhat more than our translation reaches to ; it is there, *Intelligere faciam te, I will make thee understand.* Man can instruct, God only can make us understand. And then it is *Faciam te,* I will make thee, thee understand ; the work is the Lord's, the understanding is the man's : for God does not work in man as the devil did in idols and *in pythonissis,* and *in ventriloquis,* in possessed persons, who had no voluntary concurrence with the action of the devil, but were merely passive ; God works so in man as that he makes man work too, *faciam te,* I will make thee understand ; that that shall be done shall be done by me, but in thee ; the power that rectifies the act is God's, the act is man's ; *Faciam te,* says God, I will make thee, thee, every particular person (for that arises out of this singular and distributive word, *thee,* which threatens no exception, no exclusion), I will make every person to whom I present instruction, capable of that instruction ; and if he receive it not, it is only his, and not my fault. And so this first part is an instruction *de credendis,* of such things, as by God's rectifying of our understanding we are bound to believe. And then, in a second part, there follows a more particular instructing, *Docebo,* "*I will teach thee,*" and that *in via,* "*in the way ;*" it is not only *de via,* to teach thee which is the way, that thou mayst find it, but *in via,* how to keep the way when thou art in it ; he will teach thee, not only *ut gradiaris,* that thou mayst walk in it and not sleep, but *quomodo gradieris,* that thou mayst walk in it and not stray ; and so this second part is an institution *de agendis,* of those things which, thine understanding being formerly rectified, and deduced into a belief, thou art bound to do. And then in the last words of the text, "*I will guide thee with mine eye,*" there is a third part, an establishment, a confirmation by an incessant watchfulness in God ; he will consider, consult upon us (for so much the original word imports), he will not leave us to contingencies, to fortune ; no, nor to his own general providence, by which all creatures are universally in his protection and administration, but he will ponder us, consider us, study us ; and that with his eye, which is the sharpest and most sensible organ and instrument, soonest feels if anything be amiss, and so inclines him quickly to rectify us ; and so this third part is an instruction *de sperandis,* it hath evermore a relation to the future, to the constancy and perseverance of God's goodness towards us ; to the end, and in the end he will guide us with his eye : except the eye of God can be put out we cannot be put out of his sight and his care. So that, both our freight which we are to take in, that is, what we are to believe concerning God ; and the voyage which we are to make, how we are to steer and govern our course, that is, our behaviour and conversation in the household of the faithful ; and then the haven to which we must go, that is, our assurance of arriving at the heavenly Jerusalem, are expressed in this chart, in this map, in this instruction, in this text.—*John Donne.*

Verse 8.—This threefold repetition, "*I will instruct thee,*" "*I will teach thee,*" "*I will guide thee,*" teaches us three properties of a good teacher. First, to make the people understand the way of salvation ; secondly, to go before them ; thirdly, to watch over them and their ways.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 8.—"*The way.*" If we compare this way with all other ways, it will whet our care to enter into and continue in it ; for, first, this is the *King's highway,* in which we have promise of protection. Ps. xci. 11. Secondly, God's ways are the *cleanest* of all. 2 Sam. xxii. 31. Thirdly, God's ways are the *rightest* ways ; and, being rightest, they be also the *shortest* ways. Hosea xiv. 9.

Fourthly, God's ways are most *lightsome and cheerful.* Prov. iii. 17. Therefore, God's ways being the safest, cleanest, rightest, shortest, and lightsomest ways, we must be careful to walk in them.—*Condensed from Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 8.—"*I will guide thee with mine eye.*" We read in natural story* of some creatures, *Qui solo oculorum aspectu fovent ova,*† which hatch their eggs only by looking upon them. What cannot the eye of God produce and hatch in us? *Plus est quod probatur aspectu, quam quod sermone.*‡ A man may seem to commend in words, and yet his countenance shall dispraise. His word infuses good purposes into us; but if God continue his eye upon us it is a further approbation, for he is a God of pure eyes, and will not look upon the wicked. "This land doth the Lord thy God care for, and the eyes of the Lord are always upon it from the beginning of the year, even to the end thereof." Deut. xi. 12. What a cheerful spring, what a fruitful autumn hath that soul, that hath the eye of the Lord always upon her! The eye of the Lord upon me makes midnight noon; it makes Capricorn Cancer, and the winter's the summer's solstice; the eye of the Lord sanctifies, nay, more than sanctifies, glorifies all the eclipses of dishonour, makes melancholy cheerfulness, diffidence assurance, and turns the jealousy of the sad soul into infallibility. . . . This guiding us with his eye manifests itself in these two great effects; conversion to him, and union with him. First, his eye works upon ours; his eye turns ours to look upon him. Still it is so expressed with an *Ecce;* "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon all them that fear him;" his eye calls ours to behold that; and then our eye calls upon his, to observe our cheerful readiness. . . . When, as a well made picture doth always look upon him that looks upon it, this image of God in our soul is turned to him, by his turning to it, it is impossible we should do any foul, any uncomely thing in his presence. . . . The other great effect of his guiding us with his eye, is, that it unites us to himself; when he fixes his eye upon us, and accepts the return of ours to him, then he "keeps" us as the "apple" of his "eye." Zech. ii. 8. . . . . These are the two great effects of his guiding us by his eye, that first, his eye turns us to himself, and then turns us into himself; first, his eye turns ours to him, and then, that makes us all one with himself, so as that our afflictions shall be put upon his patience, and our dishonours shall be injurious to him; we cannot be safer than by being his; but thus we are not only his, but he; to every persecutor, in every one of our behalf, he shall say, *Cur me?* Why persecutest thou me? And as he is all power, and can defend us, so here he makes himself all eye, which is the most tender part, and most sensible of our pressures.—*Condensed from John Donne.*

Verse 8.—"*I will guide thee with mine eye.*" Marg., *I will counsel* thee, *mine eye* shall be *upon thee.* The margin expresses the sense of the Hebrew. The literal *meaning* is, "I will counsel thee; mine eyes shall be upon thee." De Wette: "my eye shall be directed towards thee." The *idea* is that of one who is telling another what way he is to take in order that he may reach a certain place; and he says he will watch him, or will keep an eye upon him; he will not let him go wrong.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 8.—"*Mine eye.*" We may consider mercies as the beamings of the Almighty's eye, when the light of his countenance is lifted up upon us; and that man as guided by the eye, whom mercies attract and attach to his Maker. But oh! let us refuse to be guided by the eye, and it will become needful that we be curbed with the hand. If we abuse our mercies, if we forget their Author, and yield him not gratefully the homage of our affections, we do but oblige him, by his love for our souls, to apportion us disaster and trouble. Complain not, then, that there is so much of sorrow in your lot; but consider

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*A reviewer remarks upon the bad natural history which we quote. We reply that to alter it would be to spoil the allusions, and we are making a book for men, not for babes. No person in his senses is likely at this day to believe the fables which in former ages passed current for facts.

† Pliny. ‡ Ambrose.

rather how much of it you may have wilfully brought upon yourselves. Listen to the voice of God. "*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye*"—mine eye, whose glance gilds all that is beautiful, whose light disperses all darkness, prevents all danger, diffuses all happiness. And why, then, is it that ye are sorely disquieted? why is it that "fear and the pit" are so often upon you; that one blessing after another disappears from your circle; and that God seems to deal with you as with the wayward and unruly, on whom any thing of gentleness would be altogether lost?, Ah! if you would account for many mercies that have departed, if you would insure permanence to those that are yet left, examine how deficient you may hitherto have been, and strive to be more diligent for the future, in obeying an admonition which implies that we should be guided by the soft lustres of the eye, if our obduracy did not render indispensable the harsh constraints of the rein.—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 9.—"*Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule,*" etc. How many run mad of this cause, inordinate and furious lusts! The prophet Jeremiah, chap. ii. 24, compareth Israel to "a swift dromedary, traversing her ways," and to a "wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure." "*Be ye not,*" said the psalmographer, "as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." Men have understanding, not beasts; yet when the frenzy of lust overwhelmeth their senses, we may take up the word of the prophet and pour it on them: "Every man is a beast by his own knowledge." And therefore "man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like unto beasts that perish" (Ps. xlix. 20). Did not the bridle of God's overruling providence restrain their madness, they would cast off the saddle of reason, and kick nature itself in the face.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 9.—"*Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule,*" etc. According to the several natures of these two beasts, the fathers and other expositors have made several interpretations; at least, several allusions. They consider the horse and the mule to admit any rider, any burden, without discretion or difference, without debatement or consideration; they never ask whether their rider be noble or base, nor whether their load be gold for the treasure, or roots for the market. And those expositors find the same indifference in an habitual sinner to any kind of sin; whether he sin for pleasure, or sin for profit, or sin but for company, still he sins. They consider in the mule, that one of his parents being more ignoble than the other, he is likest the worst, he hath more of the ass than of the horse in him; and they find in us, that all our actions and thoughts taste more of the ignobler part of earth than of heaven. St. Hierome thinks fierceness and rashness to be presented in the horse, and sloth in the mule. And St. Augustine carries these two qualities far; he thinks that in this fierceness of the horse the Gentiles are represented, which ran far from the knowledge of Christianity; and by the laziness of the mule the Jews, who came nothing so fast, as they were invited by their former helps to the embracing thereof. They have gone far in these allusions and applications; and they might have gone as far further as it had pleased them; they have sea-room enough, that will compare a beast and a sinner together; and they shall find many times, in the way, the beast the better man.—*John Donne.*

Verse 9.—"*Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule,*" etc. Consider the causes why a broken leg is incurable in a horse, and easily curable in a man. The horse is incapable of counsel to submit himself to the farrier; and therefore in case his leg be set he flings, flounces, and flies out, unjointing it again by his misemployed mettle, counting all binding to be shackles and fetters unto him: whereas a man willingly resigns himself to be ordered by the *surgeon*, preferring rather to be a prisoner for some days, than a cripple all his life. "*Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding;*" but "let patience have its perfect work in thee." James i. 4.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 9.—"*Bit and Bridle.*" מֶתֶג־וָרֶסֶן. The LXX render the first of these

two words by χαλινῷ, the second by κημῷ. The word χαλινός signifies the iron of the common bridle, which is put into the horse's mouth, the bit, or curb. But κημός was something like a muzzle, which was put upon mischievous horses or mules to hinder them from biting. Xenophon says, that it allowed them to breathe, but kept the mouth shut, so that they could not bite. Not knowing the term of art for this contrivance, I call it a muzzle. The verb קָרַב is a military term, and signifies to advance, as an enemy, to attack. The "coming near," therefore, intended here, is a coming near to do mischief. The admonition given by the psalmist to his companions, is to submit to the instruction and guidance graciously promised from heaven, and not to resemble, in a refractory disposition, those ill-conditioned colts which are not to be governed by a simple bridle; but, unless their jaws are confined by a muzzle, will attack the rider as he attempts to mount, or the groom as he leads them to the pasture and the stable.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 9.—"*Lest they come near unto thee.*" The common version of this clause would be suitable enough in speaking of a wild beast, but in reference to a mule or a horse the words can only mean, because they will not follow or obey thee of their own accord; they must be constantly coerced, in the way both of compulsion and restraint.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 9.—"Be ye not like a horse or mule, which have no understanding, and whose ornament is a bridle and bit, to hold them: they do not come unto thee *of themselves.*"—*Charles Carter, in "The Book of Psalms."* 1869. [*A new Translation.*]

Verse 10.—"*He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.*" Even as in the midst of the sphere is the centre, from which all lines being drawn do tend towards their circumference: so a good Christian man hath God for his circumference; for whatever he thinketh, speaketh, or doth, it tendeth to Christ, of whom he is compassed round about.—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 10.—"*Mercy shall compass him about.*" He shall be *surrounded* with mercy—as one is surrounded by the air, or by the sunlight. He shall find mercy and favour everywhere—at home, abroad; by day, by night; in society, in solitude; in sickness, in health; in life, in death; in time, in eternity. He shall walk amidst mercies; he shall die amidst mercies; he shall live in a better world in the midst of eternal mercies.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 10.—"Mark that text," said Richard Adkins to his grandson Abel, who was reading to him the thirty-second Psalm. "Mark that text, 'He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.' I read it in my youth and believed it; and now I read it in my old age, thank God, I know it to be true. Oh! it is a blessed thing in the midst of the joys and sorrows of the world, Abel, to trust in the Lord."—*The Christian Treasury,* 1848.

Verse 11.—"*Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*" This exhortation containeth three parts. First, what he doth exhort unto, *to rejoice.* Secondly, whom, the *righteous*, and *upright men.* Thirdly, the limitation, "*in the Lord.*" He exhorteth them three times—be glad, rejoice, and be joyful; and as he made mention of a threefold blessing, so doth he of a threefold joy. Wherein we have two things necessary to be observed. First the dulness of our natures, who as slow horses need many spurs and provocations to spiritual things, whereas we are naturally overmuch bent to carnal things, that we need no incitations thereunto. But by the contrary in spiritual things, we are cast into a deep sleep, who cannot be awakened at the first cry; but as men after drink have need to be roused often, that they may behold the light; so men drunken with the pleasures of sin, as Nazianzen saith, must be wakened by divers exhortations; as this same prophet in the subsequent Psalm redoubleth his exhortations for the same effect. And the apostle to the Philippians saith: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice," (chap. iv. 4.) Next, perceive that this exhortation

grows: for the word *be glad*, properly in the original signifieth an inward and hearty joy, by the presence or hope at least of a thing desirable or good. The word *rejoice*, to express our joy by some outward gesture, sometimes used for dancing, as, "The hills skip for gladness." Ps. lxv. 12. The word *be joyful*, to cry for gladness, as the dumb man's tongue shall sing. This gradation teacheth us, that this is the nature of spiritual joy—that it still increaseth in us by certain degrees, until it come to the prefection of all joy, which is signified by the last word, importing, as it were, a triumph and shouting after victory. So that they are truly penitent who have overcome sin and Satan in their spiritual combat, and have triumphed over them as vanquished enemies.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 11.—"*Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous.*" There's never a joyful man alive but a believer. Will you say that men take pleasure in their sins? Why, that is the *Devil's* joy; or that they rejoice in full barns and bags? That is the *fool's* joy; or that they rejoice in wine, that is, all dainties that gratify the palate? That is a *Bedlam* joy. Read and believe Eccl. ii. 3; indeed, from the first verse to the eleventh, the whole book, but especially that chapter, is the divinest philosophy that ever was or will be.—*Christopher Fowler* (1610—1678), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 11.—"*Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*" When the poet Carpani enquired of his friend Haydn, how it happened that his church music was so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. "I cannot," he said, "make it otherwise, I write according to the thoughts I feel: when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen: and, since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit.—*John Whitecross's Anecdotes.*

Verse 11.—Here the sensual man, that haply would catch hold when it is said, "*Rejoice,*" by-and-by, when it is added, "*in the Lord,*" will let his hold go. But they that, by reason of the billows and waves of the troublesome sea of this world, cannot brook the speech when it is said, "*Rejoice,*" are to lay sure hold-fast upon it when it is added, "*Rejoice in the Lord.*"—*Henry Airay.*

Verse 11.—

> O sing unto this glittering glorious King,
> O praise his name let every living thing;
> Let heart and voice, like bells of silver, ring
> The comfort that this day doth bring.
>
> *Kinwellmersh, quoted by A. Moody Stuart.*

Verse 11.—It is storied by the famous Tully concerning Syracuse, that there is no day throughout the whole year so stormy and tempestuous in which the inhabitants have not some glimpse and sight of the sun. The like observation may be truly made on all those Psalms of David in which his complaints are most multiplied, his fears and pressures most insisted on; that there is not any of them so totally overcast with the black darkness of despair, but that we may easily discern them to be here and there intervened and streaked with some comfortable expressions of his faith and hope in God. If in the beginning of a Psalm we find him restless in his motions, like Noah's dove upon the overspreading waters; yet in the close we shall see him like the same dove returning with an olive branch in its mouth, and fixing upon the ark. If we find him in another Psalm staggering in the midst of his distresses, through the prevalency of carnal fears, we may also in it behold him recovering himself again, by fetching arguments from faith, whose topics are of a higher elevation than to be shaken by the timorous suggestions that arise from the flesh. If at another time we behold him like to a boat on drift, that is, tossed and beaten by the inconstant winds and fierce waves; yet we shall still find all his rollings and agitations to be such as carry him towards the standing shore, where he rides at last both in peace and safety.—*William Spurstowe.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Gospel benedictions. Take the first Psalm with thirty-second, show the doctrinal and practical harmoniously blended. Or, take the first, the thirty-second, and the forty-first, and show how we go from reading the word, to feeling its power, and thence to living charitably towards men.

Verse 1.—*Evangelical Blessedness.* I. The original condition of its possessor. II. The nature of the benefit received. III. The channel by which it came. IV. The means by which it may be obtained by us.

Verses 1, 2.—The nature of sin and the modes of pardon.

Verse 2.—Non-imputation, a remarkable doctrine.—Prove, explain, and improve it.

Verse 2.—"*No guile.*" The honesty of heart of the pardoned man.

Verse 3.—*Retention of our griefs to ourselves.*—Natural tendency of timidity and despair; danger of it; means of divulging grief; encouragements to do so; the blessed person who is ready to hear confession.

The silent mourner the greatest sufferer.

Verses 3, 4.—"Terrible Convictions and Gentle Drawings." See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 313.

Verse 4.—The sorrows of a convinced soul. Daily, nightly, from God, heavy, weakening, destroying.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Spiritual drought.

Verse 5.—The gracious results of a full confession; or, confession and absolution scripturally explained.

Verse 6.—The *godly* man's picture, drawn with a Scripture pencil.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 6.—The experience of one, the encouragement of all.

Verse 6 (*first clause*).—The day of grace, how to improve it.

Verse 6 (*whole verse*).—Pardon of sin the guarantee that other mercies shall be given.

Verse 6 (*last clause*).—Imminent troubles, eminent deliverances.

Verse 6 (*last clause*).—The felicity of the faithful.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 7.—Danger felt, refuge known, possession claimed, joy experienced.

Verse 7 (*first sentence*).—Christ, a hiding-place from sin, Satan, and sorrow, in death, and at judgment.

Verse 7 (*second sentence*).—Troubles from which saints shall be preserved.

Verse 7 (*last sentence*).—The circle of song—who draws the circle, what is the circumference, who is in the centre.

Verse 7.—"*Songs of deliverance.*" From guilt, hell, death, enemies, doubts, temptations, accidents, plots, etc.

The divine schoolmaster, his pupils, their lessons, their chastisements and their rewards.

Verse 8.—The power of the eye.—*Henry Melvill.* In which he vainly tries to prove infant baptism and episcopacy, which he admits are not expressly taught in Scripture, but declares them to be hinted at as with the divine eye.

Verse 9.—God's bits and bridles, the mules who need them, and reasons why we ought not to be of the number.

Verse 9.—How far in our actions we are better, and how far worse than horses and mules.

Verse 10.—The many sorrows which result from sin. The encompassing mercy of the believer's life even in his most troublous times.

The portion of the wicked, and the lot of the faithful.

Verse 11.—A believer's gladness. *Its spring,* "in the Lord;" *its vivacity,* "shout;" *its propriety,* it is commanded; *its beneficial results and its abundant reasons.*

Verse 11.—"*Upright in heart,*" an instructive description. Not horizontal or grovelling, nor bent, nor inclined, but vertical in heart.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTY-SECOND PSALM.

This treatyse concernynge the fruytful sayynges of David the Kynge & prophete in the seuen penytencyall psalmes. Deuyded in seuen sermons was made and compyled by the ryght reuerente fader in god Johan fyssher doctoure of dyuynyte & bysshop of Rochester at the exortacyõ and sterynge of the moost excellẽt princesse Margarete coñtesse of Rychemoñt and Derby & moder to our souerayne lorde Kynge henry the VII.

[4to. No date, but marked in the B. M. Cat. 1509. An 8vo. edition has on Title Page, An. M.D.L.U.]

David's Learning, or Way to True Happiness: in a Commentarie upon the 32 Psalme. Preached and now published by T[HOMAS] T[AYLOR], late Fellow of Christ's College in Cambridge. London: 1617. [4to.]

David's Teares. By SIR JOHN HAYWARD, Knight, Doctor of Lawe. London. Printed by John Bell. 1623. [4to.] On Psalms VI., XXXII., and CXXX.

Meditations on Psalm XXXII., in Archbishop Leighton's Works.

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Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm. By CHARLES H. BINGHAM, B.A., Curate of Hale Magna. 1836. [12mo.]

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PSALM XXXIII.

TITLE.—*This song of praise bears no title or indication of authorship; to teach us, says Dickson, "to look upon holy Scripture as altogether inspired of God, and not put price upon it for the writers thereof."*

SUBJECT AND DIVISIONS.—*The praise of Jehovah is the subject of this sacred song. The righteous are exhorted to praise him, verses, 1--3; because of the excellency of his character, 4, 5; and his majesty in creation, 6, 7. Men are bidden to fear before Jehovah because his purposes are accomplished in providence, 8—11. His people are proclaimed blessed, 12. The omniscience and omnipotence of God, and his care of his people are celebrated, in opposition to the weakness of an arm of flesh, 13—19; and the Psalm concludes with a fervent expression of confidence, 20, 21, and an earnest prayer, 22.*

EXPOSITION.

REJOICE in the LORD, O ye righteous: *for* praise is comely for the upright.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

1. "*Rejoice in the Lord.*" Joy is the soul of praise. To delight ourselves in God is most truly to extol him, even if we let no notes of song proceed from our lips. That God is, and that he is such a God, and our God, ours for ever and ever, should wake within us an unceasing and overflowing joy. To rejoice in temporal comforts is dangerous, to rejoice in self is foolish, to rejoice in sin is fatal, but to rejoice in God is heavenly. He who would have a double heaven must begin below to rejoice like those above. "*O ye righteous.*" This is peculiarly your duty, your obligations are greater, and your spiritual nature more adapted to the work, be ye then first in the glad service. Even the righteous are not always glad, and have need to be stirred up to enjoy their privileges. "*For praise is comely for the upright.*" God has an eye to things which are becoming. When saints wear their choral robes, they look fair in the Lord's sight. A harp suits a bloodwashed hand. No jewel more ornamental to a holy face than sacred praise. Praise is not comely from unpardoned professional singers; it is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout. Crooked hearts make crooked music, but the upright are the Lord's delight. Praise is the dress of saints in heaven, it is meet that they should fit it on below.

2. "*Praise the Lord with harp.*" Men need all the help they can get to stir them up to praise. This is the lesson to be gathered from the use of musical instruments under the old dispensation. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days, when Jesus gives us spiritual manhood, we can make melody without strings and pipes. We who do not believe these things to be expedient in worship, lest they should mar its simplicity, do not affirm them to be unlawful, and if any George Herbert or Martin Luther can worship God better by the aid of well-tuned instruments, who shall gainsay their right? *We* do not need them, they would hinder than help our praise, but if others are otherwise minded, are they not living in gospel liberty? "*Sing unto him.*" This is the sweetest and best of music. No instrument like the human voice. As a help to singing the instrument is alone to be tolerated, for keys and strings do not praise the Lord. "*With the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.*" The Lord must have a full octave, for all notes are his, and all music belongs to him. Where several pieces of music are mentioned, we are taught to praise God with all the powers which we possess.

3. "*Sing unto him a new song.*" All songs of praise should be "*unto him.*" Singing for singing's sake is nothing worth; we must carry our tribute to the King, and not cast it to the winds. Do most worshippers mind this? Our faculties should be exercised when we are magnifying the Lord, so as not to run in an old groove without thought; we ought to make every hymn of praise a new song. To keep up the freshness of worship is a great thing, and in private it is indispensable. Let us not present old worn-out praise, but put life, and soul, and heart, into every song, since we have new mercies every day, and see new beauties in the work and word of our Lord. "*Play skilfully.*" It is wretched to hear God praised in a slovenly manner. He deserves the best that we have. Every Christian should endeavour to sing according to the rules of the art, so that he may keep time and tune with the congregation. The sweetest tunes and the sweetest voices, with the sweetest words, are all too little for the Lord our God; let us not offer him limping rhymes, set to harsh tunes, and growled out by discordant voices. "*With a loud noise.*" Heartiness should be conspicuous in divine worship. Well-bred whispers are disreputable here. It is not that the Lord cannot hear us, but that it is natural for great exultation to express itself in the loudest manner. Men shout at the sight of their kings: shall we offer no loud hosannahs to the Son of David?

4 For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

4. "*For the word of the Lord is right.*" His ordinances both natural, moral, and spiritual, are right, and especially his incarnate Word, who is the Lord our righteousness. Whatever God has ordained must be good, and just, and excellent. There are no anomalies in God's universe, except what sin has made; his word of command made all things good. When we look at his word of promise, and remember its faithfulness, what reasons have we for joy and thankfulness! "*And all his works are done in truth.*" His work is the outflow of his word, and it is true to it. He neither doth nor saith anything ill; in deed and speech he agrees with himself and the purest truth. There is no lie in God's word, and no sham in his works; in creation, providence, and revelation, unalloyed truth abounds. To act truth as well as to utter it is divine. Let not children of God ever yield their principles in practice any more than in heart. What a God we serve! The more we know of him, the more our better natures approve his surpassing excellence; even his afflicting works are according to his truthful word.

> "Why should I complain of want or distress,
> Affliction or pain? he told me no less;
> The heirs of salvation, I know from his word,
> Through much tribulation must follow their Lord."

God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, acts with a hand which never fails. Bless his name.

5. "*He loveth righteousness and judgment.*" The theory and the practice of right he intensely loves. He doth not only approve the true and the just, but his inmost soul delights therein. The character of God is a sea, every drop of which should become a wellhead of praise for his people. The righteousness of Jesus is peculiarly dear to the Father, and for its sake he takes pleasure in those to whom it is imputed. Sin, on the other hand, is infinitely abhorrent to the Lord, and woe unto those who die in it; if he sees no righteousness in them, he will deal righteously with them, and judgment stern and final will be the result. "*The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*" Come hither, astronomers, geologists, naturalists, botanists, chemists, miners, yea, all of you who study the works of God, for all your truthful stories confirm this declaration. From the midge in the sunbeam to leviathan in the ocean all creatures

own the bounty of the Creator. Even the pathless desert blazes with some undiscovered mercy, and the caverns of ocean conceal the treasures of love. Earth might have been as full of terror as of grace, but instead thereof it teems and overflows with kindness. He who cannot see it, and yet lives in it as the fish lives in the water, deserves to die. If earth be full of mercy, what must heaven be where goodness concentrates its beams?

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

6. "*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.*" The angelic heavens, the sidereal heavens, and the firmament or terrestrial heavens, were all made to start into existence by a word; what if we say by *the* Word, "For without him was not anything made that is made." It is interesting to note the mention of the Spirit in the next clause, "*and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;*" the word "*breath*" is the same as is elsewhere rendered Spirit. Thus the three persons of the Godhead unite in creating all things. How easy for the Lord to make the most ponderous orbs, and the most glorious angels! A word, a breath could do it. It is as easy for God to create the universe as for a man to breathe, nay, far easier, for man breathes not independently, but borrows the breath in his nostrils from his Maker. It may be gathered from this verse that the constitution of all things is from the infinite wisdom, for his word may mean his appointment and determination. A wise and merciful Word has arranged, and a living Spirit sustains all the creation of Jehovah.

7. "*He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap.*" The waters were once scattered like corn strewn upon a threshing floor: they are now collected in one spot as an heap. Who else could have gathered them into one channel but their great Lord, at whose bidding the waters fled away? The miracle of the Red Sea is repeated in nature day by day, for the sea which now invades the shore under the impulse of sun and moon, would soon devour the land if bounds were not maintained by the divine decree. "*He layeth up the depth in storehouses.*" The depths of the main are God's great cellars and storerooms for the tempestuous element. Vast reservoirs of water are secreted in the bowels of the earth, from which issue our springs and wells of water. What a merciful provision for a pressing need? May not the text also refer to the clouds, and the magazines of hail, and snow, and rain, those treasuries of merciful wealth for the fields of earth? These aqueous masses are not piled away as in lumber rooms, but in storehouses for future beneficial use. Abundant tenderness is seen in the foresight of our heavenly Joseph, whose granaries are already filled against earth's time of need. These stores might have been, as once they were, the ammunition of vengeance, they are now a part of the commissariat of mercy.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was *done;* he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

8. "*Let all the earth fear the Lord.*" Not only Jews, but Gentiles. The psalmist was not a man blinded by national prejudice, he did not desire to restrict the worship of Jehovah to the seed of Abraham. He looks for homage even to far-off nations. If they are not well enough instructed to be able to praise,

at least let them fear. There is an inferior kind of worship in the trembling which involuntarily admits the boundless power of the thundering God. A defiant blasphemer is out of place in a world covered with tokens of the divine power and Godhead: the whole earth cannot afford a spot congenial for the erection of a synagogue of Atheism, nor a man in whom it is becoming to profane the name of God. "*Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.*" Let them forsake their idols, and reverently regard the only living God. What is here placed as a wish may also be read as a prophecy: the adoration of God will yet be universal.

9. "*For he spake, and it was done.*" Creation was the fruit of a word. Jehovah said, "Light be," and light was. The Lord's acts are sublime in their ease and instantaneousness. "What a word is this?" This was the wondering enquiry of old, and it may be ours to this day. "*He commanded, and it stood fast.*" Out of nothing creation stood forth, and was confirmed in existence. The same power which first uplifted, now makes the universe to abide; although we may not observe it, there is as great a display of sublime power in confirming as in creating. Happy is the man who has learned to lean his all upon the sure word of him who built the skies!

10. "*The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought.*" While his own will is done, he takes care to anticipate the wilfulness of his enemies. Before they come to action he vanquishes them in the council-chamber; and when, well armed with craft, they march to the assault, he frustrates their knaveries, and makes their promising plots to end in nothing. Not only the folly of the heathen, but their wisdom too, shall yield to the power of the cross of Jesus: what a comfort is this to those who have to labour where sophistry, and philosophy, falsely so called, are set in opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus. "*He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.*" Their persecutions, slanders, falsehoods, are like puff-balls flung against a granite wall—they produce no result at all; for the Lord overrules the evil, and brings good out of it. The cause of God is never in danger: infernal craft is outwitted by infinite wisdom, and Satanic malice held in check by boundless power.

11. "*The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever.*" He changes not his purpose, his decree is not frustrated, his designs are accomplished. God has a predestination according to the counsel of his will, and none of the devices of his foes can thwart his decree for a moment. Men's purposes are blown to and fro like the thread of the gossamer or the down of the thistle, but the eternal purposes are firmer than the earth. "*The thoughts of his heart to all generations.*" Men come and go, sons follow their sires to the grave, but the undisturbed mind of God moves on in unbroken serenity, producing ordained results with unerring certainty. No man can expect his will or plan to be carried out from age to age; the wisdom of one period is the folly of another, but the Lord's wisdom is always wise, and his designs run on from century to century. His power to fulfil his purposes is by no means diminished by the lapse of years. He who was absolute over Pharaoh in Egypt is not one whit the less to-day the King of kings and Lord of lords; still do his chariot wheels roll onward in imperial grandeur, none being for a moment able to resist his eternal will.

12 Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

12. "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.*" Israel was happy in the worship of the only true God. It was the blessedness of the chosen nation to have received a revelation from Jehovah. While others grovelled before their idols, the chosen people were elevated by a spiritual religion which introduced them to the invisible God, and led them to trust in him. All who confide in the Lord are blessed in the largest and deepest sense, and none can reverse the blessing. "*And the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*" Election is at the bottom of it all. The divine choice rules the day; none take

Jehovah to be their God till he takes them to be his people. What an ennobling choice this is! We are selected to no mean estate, and for no ignoble purpose: we are made the peculiar domain and delight of the Lord our God. Being so blessed, let us rejoice in our portion, and show the world by our lives that we serve a glorious Master.

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 An horse *is* a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

13. "*The Lord looketh from heaven.*" The Lord is represented as dwelling above and looking down below; seeing all things, but peculiarly observing and caring for those who trust in him. It is one of our choicest privileges to be always under our Father's eye, to be never out of sight of our best Friend. "*He beholdeth all the sons of men.*" All Adam's sons are as well watched as was Adam himself, their lone progenitor in the garden. Ranging from the frozen pole to the scorching equator, dwelling in hills and valleys, in huts and palaces, alike doth the divine eye regard all the members of the family of man.

14. "*From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.*" Here the sentiment is repeated: it is worth repeating, and it needs repeating, for man is most prone to forget it. As great men sit at their windows and watch the crowd below, so doth the Lord; he gazeth intently upon his responsible creatures, and forgets nothing of what he sees.

15. "*He fashioneth their hearts alike.*" By which is meant that all hearts are equally fashioned by the Lord, kings' hearts as well as the hearts of beggars. The text does not mean that all hearts are created originally alike by God, such a statement would scarcely be true, since there is the utmost variety in the constitutions and dispositions of men. All men equally owe the possession of life to the Creator, and have therefore no reason to boast themselves. What reason has the vessel to glorify itself in presence of the potter? "*He considereth all their works.*" Not in vain doth God see men's acts: he ponders and judges them. He reads the secret design in the outward behaviour, and resolves the apparent good into its real elements. This consideration foretokens a judgment when the results of the divine thoughts will be meted out in measures of happiness or woe. Consider thy ways, O man, for God considers them!

16. "*There is no king saved by the multitude of an host.*" Mortal power is a fiction, and those who trust in it are dupes. Serried ranks of armed men have failed to maintain an empire, or even to save their monarch's life when a decree from the court of heaven has gone forth for the empire's overthrow. The all-seeing God preserves the poorest of his people when they are alone and friendless, but ten thousand armed men cannot ensure safety to him whom God leaves to destruction. "*A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.*" So far from guarding others, the valiant veteran is not able to deliver himself. When his time comes to die, neither the force of his arms nor the speed of his legs can save him. The weakest believer dwells safely under the shadow of Jehovah's

throne, while the most mighty sinner is in peril every hour. Why do we talk so much of our armies and our heroes? the Lord alone has strength, and let him alone have praise.

17. "*An horse is a vain thing for safety.*" Military strength among the Orientals lay much in horses and scythed chariots, but the psalmist calls them a lie, a deceitful confidence. Surely the knight upon his gallant steed may be safe, either by valour or by flight? Not so, his horse shall bear him into danger or crush him with its fall. "*Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*" Thus the strongest defences are less than nothing when most needed. God only is to be trusted and adored. Sennacherib with all his cavalry is not a match for one angel of the Lord, Pharaoh's horses and chariots found it vain to pursue the Lord's anointed, and so shall all the leaguered might of earth and hell find themselves utterly defeated when they rise against the Lord and his chosen.

18. "*Behold.*" For this is a greater wonder than hosts and horses, a surer confidence than chariots or shields. "*The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him.*" That eye of peculiar care is their glory and defence. None can take them at unawares, for the celestial watcher foresees the designs of their enemies, and provides against them. They who fear God need not fear anything else; let them fix their eye of faith on him, and his eye of love will always rest upon them. "*Upon them that hope in his mercy.*" This one would think to be a small evidence of grace, and yet it is a valid one. Humble hope shall have its share as well as courageous faith. Say, my soul, is not this an encouragement to thee? Dost thou not hope in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus? Then the Father's eye is as much upon thee as upon the elder born of the family. These gentle words, like soft bread, are meant for babes in grace, who need infants' food.

19. "*To deliver their soul from death.*" The Lord's hand goes with his eye; he sovereignly preserves those whom he graciously observes. Rescues and restorations hedge about the lives of the saints; death cannot touch them till the King signs his warrant and gives him leave, and even then his touch is not so much mortal as immortal; he doth not so much kill us as kill our mortality. "*And to keep them alive in famine.*" Gaunt famine knows its master. God has meal and oil for his Elijahs somewhere. "Verily thou shalt be fed" is a divine provision for the man of faith. The Preserver of men will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish. Power in human hands is outmatched by famine, but God is good at a pinch, and proves his bounty under the most straitened circumstances. Believer, wait upon thy God in temporals. His eye is upon thee, and his hand will not long delay.

20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he *is* our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

20. "*Our soul waiteth for the Lord.*" Here the godly avow their reliance upon him whom the Psalm extols. To wait is a great lesson. To be quiet in expectation, patient in hope, single in confidence, is one of the bright attainments of a Christian. Our soul, our life, must hang upon God; we are not to trust him with a few gewgaws, but with all we have and are. "*He is our help and our shield.*" Our help in labour, our shield in danger. The Lord answereth all things to his people. He is their all in all. Note the three "*ours*" in the text. These holdfast words are precious. Personal possession makes the Christian man; all else is mere talk.

21. "*For our hearts shall rejoice in him.*" The duty commended and commanded in the first verse is here presented to the Lord. We, who trust, cannot but be of a glad heart, our inmost nature must triumph in our faithful God. "*Because we have trusted in his holy name.*" The root of faith in due time bears the flower of rejoicing. Doubts breed sorrow, confidence creates joy.

22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

Here is a large and comprehensive prayer to close with. It is an appeal for "*mercy*," which even joyful believers need; and it is sought for in a proportion which the Lord has sanctioned. "According to your faith be it unto you," is the Master's word, and he will not fall short of the scale which he has himself selected. Yet, Master, do more than this when hope is faint, and bless us far above what we ask or even think.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—A thanksgiving of the church triumphant in the latter ages, for her final deliverance, by the overthrow of Antichrist and his armies.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Whole Psalm.—Let us follow the holy man a moment in his meditation. His Psalm is not composed in scholastic form, in which the author confines himself to fixed rules; and, scrupulously following a philosophic method, lays down principles, and infers consequences. However, he establishes principles, the most proper to give us sublime ideas of the Creator; and he speaks with more precision of the works and attributes of God than the greatest philosophers have spoken of them.

How absurdly have the philosophers treated of *the origin of the world!* How few of them have reasoned conclusively on this important subject! Our prophet solves the important question by one single principle; and, what is more remarkable, this principle, which is nobly expressed, carries the clearest evidence with it. The principle is this: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," verse 6. This is the most rational account that was ever given of the creation of the world. The world is the work of a self-efficient will, and it is this principle alone that can account for its creation. The most simple appearances in nature are sufficient to lead us to this principle. Either my will is self-efficient, or there is some other being whose will is self efficient. What I say of myself, I say of my parents; and what I affirm of my parents, I affirm of my more remote ancestors, and of all the finite creatures from whom they derived their existence. Most certainly either finite beings have a self-efficient will, which it is impossible to suppose, for a finite creature with a self-efficient will is a contradiction: either, I say, a finite creature has a self-efficient will, or there is a First Cause who has a self-efficient will; and that there is such a Being is the principle of the psalmist; "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

If philosophers have reasoned inconclusively on the origin of the world, they have spoken of *its government* with equal uncertainty. The psalmist determines this question with great facility, by a single principle, which results from the former, and which, like the former, carries its evidence with it. "The Lord looketh from heaven; he considereth all the works of all the inhabitants of the earth," verses 13, 14. This is the doctrine of providence. And on what is the doctrine of providence founded? On this principle: God "fashioneth their hearts alike," verse 15. Attend a moment to the evidence of this reasoning, my brethren. The doctrine of providence expressed in these words, "God considereth the works of the inhabitants of the earth," is a necessary consequence of his principle, "God fashioneth their hearts alike;" and this principle is a necessary consequence of that which the psalmist had before laid down to account for the origin of the world. Yes, from the doctrine of God

the Creator of men, follows that of God the inspector, the director, rewarder, and the punisher of their actions. One of the most specious objections that has ever been opposed to the doctrine of providence, is a contrast between the grandeur of God and the meanness of men. How can such an insignificant creature as man be the object of the care and attention of such a magnificent being as God? No objection can be more specious, or, in appearance, more invincible. The distance between the meanest insect and the mightiest monarch, who treads and crushes reptiles to death without the least regard to them, is a very imperfect image of the distance between God and man. That which proves that it would be beneath the dignity of a monarch to observe the motions of ants, or worms, to interest himself in their actions, to punish, or to reward them, seems to demonstrate, that God would degrade himself were he to observe, to direct, to punish, to reward mankind, who are infinitely inferior to him. But one fact is sufficient to answer this specious objection: that is, that God has created mankind. Does God degrade himself more by governing than by creating mankind? Who can persuade himself that a wise Being has given to intelligent creatures faculties capable of obtaining knowledge and virtue, without willing that they should endeavour to acquire knowledge and virtue? Or who can imagine, that a wise Being, who wills that his intelligent creatures should acquire knowledge and virtue, will not punish them if they neglect those acquisitions; and will not show by the distribution of his benefits that he approves their endeavours to obtain them?

Unenlightened philosophers have treated of *the attributes of God* with as much abstruseness as they have written of his works. The moral attributes of God, as they are called in the schools, were mysteries which they could not unfold. These may be reduced to two classes; attributes of *goodness*, and attributes of *justice*. Philosophers, who had admitted these, have usually taken that for granted which they ought to have proved. They collected together in their minds all perfections; they reduced them all to one object which they denominated *a perfect being:* and supposing, without proving, that a perfect being existed, they attributed to him, without proof, everything that they considered as a perfection. The psalmist shows by a surer way that there is a God supremely just and supremely good. It is necessary, in order to convince a rational being of the justice and goodness of God, to follow such a method as that which we follow to prove his existence. When we would prove the existence of God, we say, there are creatures, therefore there is a Creator. In like manner, when we would prove that a creature is a just and a good being, we say, there are qualities of goodness and justice in creatures, therefore he, from whom these creatures derive their existence, is a being just and good. Now, this is the reasoning of the psalmist in this Psalm: "The Lord loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" (verse 5); that is to say, it is impossible to consider the work of the Creator, without receiving evidence of his goodness. And the works of nature which demonstrate the goodness of God, prove his justice also; for God has created us with such dispositions, that we cannot enjoy the gifts of his goodness without obeying the laws of his righteousness. The happiness of an individual who procures a pleasure by disobeying the laws of equity, is a violent happiness, which cannot be of long duration; and the prosperity of public bodies, when it is founded in iniquity, is an edifice which, with its basis, will be presently sunk and gone.

But what we would particularly remark is, that *the excellent principles of the psalmist concerning God are not mere speculations;* but truths from which he derives practical inferences; and he aims to extend their influence beyond private persons, even to legislators and conquerors. One would think, considering the conduct of mankind, that the consequences, which are drawn from the doctrines of which we have been speaking, belong to none but to the dregs of the people; that lawgivers and conquerors have a plan of morality peculiar to themselves, and are above the rules to which other men must submit. Our

prophet had other notions. What are his maxims of policy? They are all included in these words: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance," verse 12. What are his military maxims? They are all included in these words: "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength," verses 16, 17. Who proposes these maxims? A hermit, who never appeared on the theatre of the world? or a man destitute of the talents necessary to shine there? No: one of the wisest of kings; one of the most bold and able generals: a man whom God has self-elected to govern his chosen people, and to command those armies which fought the most obstinate battles, and gained the most complete victories. Were I to proceed in explaining the system of the psalmist, I might prove, that as he had a right to infer the doctrine of providence from the works of nature, and that of the moral attributes of God from the works of creation; so from the doctrines of the moral attributes of God, of providence, and of the works of creation, he had a right to conclude, that no conquerors or lawgivers could be truly happy but those who acted agreeably to the laws of the just and good Supreme.—*James Saurin.*

Verse 1.—"*Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.*" *Exult, ye righteous, in Jehovah!* The Hebrew verb, according to the etymologists, originally means to dance for joy, and is therefore a very strong expression for the liveliest exultation.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 1.—"*Rejoice, O ye righteous:*" not in yourselves, for that is not safe, but "*in the Lord.*"—*Augustine.*

Verse 1.—"*Praise is comely for the upright.*" Praise is not comely for any but the godly. A profane man stuck with God's praise is like a dunghill stuck with flowers. Praise in the mouth of a sinner is like an oracle in the mouth of a fool: how uncomely is it for him to praise God, whose whole life is a dishonouring of God? It is as indecent for a wicked man to praise God, who goes on in sinful practices, as it is for an usurer to talk of living by faith, or for the devil to quote Scripture. The godly are only fit to be choristers in God's praise; it is called, "the garment of praise." Isaiah lxi. 3. This garment sits handsome only on a saint's back.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 1.—This Psalm is coupled with the foregoing one by the *catchword* with which it opens, which is a repetition of the exhortation with which the preceding ends, "*Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous;*" "Shout for joy, all ye *upright.*"—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1.—He pleaseth God whom God pleaseth.—*Augustine.*

Verse 2.—"*Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.*" Here we have the first mention of musical instruments in the Psalms. It is to be observed that the early fathers almost with one accord protest against their use in churches; as they are forbidden in the Eastern church to this day, where yet, by the consent of all, the singing is infinitely superior to anything that can be heard in the West.—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 2.—"*Harp;*" "*Psaltery,*" etc. Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaise.—*Thomas Aquinas.* It was only permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal.—*Chrysostom.* The use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song.—*Justin Martyr.*

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—It is said that David praised God upon "*an instrument of ten strings;*" and he would never have told how many strings there

were, but that without all doubt he made use of them all. God hath given all of us bodies, as it were, instruments of many strings; and can we think it music good enough to strike but one string, to call upon him with our tongues only? No, no; when the still sound of the heart by holy thoughts, and the shrill sound of the tongue by holy words, and the loud sound of the hands by pious works, do all join together, that is God's concert, and the only music wherewith he is affected.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3.—"*Sing unto him.*" I. Singing is the music of *nature.* The Scriptures tell us the mountains sing (Isa. lv. 12); the valleys sing (Ps. lxv. 13); the trees of the wood sing (1 Chron. xvi. 33); nay, the air is the birds' music room, they chant their musical notes. II. Singing is the music of *ordinances.* Augustine reports of himself, that when he came to Milan and heard the people sing, he wept for joy in the church to hear that pleasing melody. And Beza confesses that at his first entrance into the congregation, and hearing them sing the ninety-first Psalm, he felt himself exceedingly comforted, and did retain the sound of it afterwards upon his heart. The Rabbins tell us that the Jews, after the feast of the Passover was celebrated, sang the hundred-and-eleventh and five following Psalms; and our Saviour and his apostles sang a hymn immediately after the blessed Supper. Matt. xxvi. 30. III. Singing is the music of *saints.* (1.) They have performed this duty in their greatest *numbers.* Ps. cxlix. 1, 2. (2.) In their greatest *straits.* Isa. xxvi. 19. (3.) In their greatest *flight.* Isa. xlii. 10, 11. (4.) In their greatest *deliverances.* (5.) In their greatest *plenties.* Isa. lxv. 14. In all these changes singing hath been their stated duty and delight. And indeed it is meet that the saints and servants of God should sing forth their joys and praises to the Lord Almighty: every attribute of him can set both their song and their tune. IV. Singing is the music of *angels.* Job tells us, "the morning stars sang together," chap. xxxviii. 7. Now these "morning stars," as Pineda tells us, are the angels; to which the Chaldee paraphrase accords, naming these morning stars, *aciem angelorum,* an host of angels. Nay, when this heavenly host was sent to proclaim the birth of our dearest Jesus, they deliver their message in this raised way of duty. Luke ii. 13. They were αἰνούντες, delivering their messages in a laudatory singing, the whole company of angels making a musical quire. Nay, in heaven there is the angels' joyous music; they there sing hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb who sits upon the throne. Rev. v. 11. V. Singing is the music of *heaven;* the glorious saints and angels accent their praises this way, and make one harmony in their state of blessedness; and this is the music of the bride-chamber. The saints who were tuning here their Psalms, are now singing their hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction; here they laboured with drowsy hearts, and faltering tongues; but in glory these impediments are removed, and nothing is left to jar their joyous celebration.—*John Wells, in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 3.—"*A new song.*" That is to say, a *new* and recent composition on account of recent benefits; or constantly new songs, song succeeding song as daily new material for divine praise offers itself to the attentive student of the works of God. Or *new,* that is, always fresh and full of life, and renewed as new occasions offer themselves: as Job says, "My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand." Or *new, i.e.,* not common but rare and exquisite; as the new name in Rev. ii. 17; the new commandment; John xiii. 34. Or this respects the gospel state, wherein is a new covenant (Heb. viii. 8), a new Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 2), a new man (Eph. ii. 15), and all things new. 2 Cor. v. 17. *New,* on account of its matter being unknown of men: as in Rev. xiv. 3, "They sung a new song, and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. *New* may be used in opposition to old. The song of Moses is old, and of the Lamb is new.—*Martin Geier* (1614—1681), *in* "*Poli Synopsis Criticorum.*"

Verse 3.—"*Sing unto him a new song.*" Put off oldness: ye know the new

song. A new man, a New Testament, a new song. A new song belongeth not to men that are old ; none learn that but new men, renewed through grace from oldness, and belonging now to the New Testament, which is the kingdom of heaven.—*Augustine.*

Verse 3.—"*A new song ;*" namely, sung with such fervency of affections as novelties usually bring with them ; or, always new, seeing God's graces never wax old ; or, sung by the motion of this new spirit of grace, which doth not so much look after the old benefits of the creation as after the new benefit of the redemption in Christ, which reneweth all things. Ps. xl. 3, and xcvi. 1 ; Rev. v. 9, and xiv. 3.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 3.—"*Sing unto him a new song.*" It is a melancholy proof of the decline of the church, when the exhortation to sing a new song is no longer attended to : in such a case, there is need of the greatest care to prevent the old ones falling into oblivion.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 3.—"*Play skilfully.*" It is not an easy matter to praise God aright ; it must be done *corde, ore, opere,* with the very best of the best.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 4.—"*The word of the Lord is right.*" His word of promise given to the church. The divine revelation to all setting forth what is to be believed, hoped for, and done. The decrees of God and his penal judgments. The whole counsel and determination of God in the creation and government of the world. "*Is right,*" without defect or error. The word *right* is opposed to *tortuous ;* it means true or certain.—*John de Pineda* (1577—1637) ; *D. H. Mollerus* (1639), *and others, in Synopsis.*

Verse 4.—"*All his works are done in truth.*"

> *Truth* is in each flower
> As well as in the solemnest things of God :
> *Truth* is the voice of nature and of time—
> *Truth* is the startling monitor within us—
> Nought is without it, it comes from the stars,
> The golden sun, and every breeze that blows—
> *Truth,* it is God ! and God is everywhere !
>
> *William Thomas Bacon.*

Verse 5.—"*The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*" If we reflect on the prodigious number of human beings who constantly receive their food, raiment, and every pleasure they enjoy, from their mother earth, we shall be convinced of the great liberality with which nature dispenses her gifts ; and not only human beings, but an innumerable quantity of living creatures besides—inhabitants of the air, the waters, and the earth—are daily indebted to nature for their support. Those animals which are under our care are still indebted to the earth for their subsistence ; for the grass, which nature spontaneously produces, is their chief food. The whole race of fishes, except those which men feed for their amusement, subsist without any of their aid. The species of birds which is perhaps the most despised and most numerous, is the sparrow. What they require for their support is incredible, but nature takes care to feed them ; they are however but the smallest part of her children. So great is the quantity of insects, that ages may pass before even their species and classes can be known. How many and how diversified the sorts of flies that play in the air ! The blood taken from us by the gnat is very accidental food for them ; and we may suppose that where there is one gnat that lives upon it, there are millions that have never tasted human blood, or that of any other animal. On what can all these creatures subsist ? Perhaps every handful of earth contains living insects ; they are discovered in every drop of water ; their multiplying and means of support are incomprehensible. While nature is thus prolific in children, she is also fruitful in means for their subsistence ; or, rather, it is the God of nature who has poured into her bosom this inexhaustible store of riches. He provides each creature with its food and dwelling. For them he causes the grass and

other herbs to grow, leaving each to select its proper food. And, however mean many creatures may appear to us, he feeds and assists them all.

O Almighty God, how manifest is thy greatness! Thou dost what the united efforts of all mankind would fail to accomplish. Thou hast given life, and breath, and being to all creatures that live in the air, the waters, or the earth. Surely thou wilt do for thy believing people what thou dost for animals and insects! When we are filled with doubts and fears, let us consider the ravens whom the Lord feeds when they cry. Let them and all creatures beside, which man takes no care of, teach us the art of contentment. The great Author of nature knows all our wants. Let us cast our every care on him, for he careth for us; and may we come boldly to the throne of grace in faith and sincerity, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of need.—*Christopher Christian Sturm.*

Verse 5.—"*The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*" To hear its worthless inhabitants complain, one would think that God dispensed *evil*, not *good*. To examine the operation of his hand, everything is marked with mercy, and there is no place where his goodness does not appear. The *overflowing kindness* of God fills the earth. Even the iniquities of men are rarely a bar to his goodness: he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain upon the *just* and the *unjust*.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5.—"*The goodness of the Lord.*" In discoursing on the glorious perfections of God, his *goodness* must by no means be omitted; for though all his perfections are his glory, yet this is particularly so called, for when Moses, the man of God, earnestly desired to behold a grand display of the glory of Jehovah, the Lord said, in answer to his petition, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee;" thus intimating that he himself accounted his goodness to be his glory (Exod. xxxiii. 19; xxxiv. 7); and it includes that mercy, grace, long-suffering, and truth, which are afterwards mentioned. When it relieves the miserable, it is *mercy;* when it bestows favours on the worthless, it is *grace;* when it bears with provoking rebels, it is *long-suffering;* when it confers promised blessings, it is *truth;* when it supplies indigent beings, it is *bounty*. *The goodness of God* is a very comprehensive term; it includes all the forms of his kindness shown to men; whether considered as creatures, as sinners, or as believers.—*George Burder*, 1838.

Verse 5.—"*The goodness of the Lord.*" He might, if he had pleased, have made everything we tasted bitter, everything we saw loathsome, everything we touched a sting, every smell a stench, every sound a discord.—*William Paley, D.D.*, 1743—1805.

Verse 6.—"*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*" That the רוּחַ is not *spirit*, but *breath*, is evident from the words "*of his mouth*" (compare Isaiah xi. 4), and from the parallelism with "*word.*" Simple *word* is simple *breath;* both together, they stand in contrast to that exercise of strength, that labour, that use of means and instruments without which feeble man can bring nothing to perfection. Then there are the parallel passages, "All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job xxvii. 3. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job xxxiii. 4. "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust, thou sendest forth thy *breath*, they are created." Psalm civ. 29, 30. On the other hand, however, the exposition which would interpret רוּחַ פִּיו, without reference to the *Spirit of God*, cannot be a correct one. In the history of the creation, to which the verse before us, as well as verses seven and nine, generally refer, the creation is described as the work of the SPIRIT of God, and his WORD. First, the *Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters, then God *said*. We may also suppose that the Spirit and the power of God are here represented by the *figure* of breath, because that in man is the first sign of life.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 6.—"*By the word of the Lord.*" May be understood of the hypostatic

Word, as John teaches us. John i. 1. (*John Cocceius*, 1603—1669). This is an illustration of the old saying, that while Grotius finds Christ nowhere, Cocceius finds Christ everywhere.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 6.—Let any make a world, and he shall be a God, saith Augustine; hence is it that the church maketh it the very first article of her Creed to believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.—*John Weemse.*

Verses 6, 9.—It is all one with God to do as to say, to perform as to promise; it is as easy, he is as willing, as able, to do the one as the other. There is no such distance betwixt God's saying and doing, as amongst men. His saying is doing: "*He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*" "*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.*" "The worlds were framed by the word of God." Heb. xi. 3. There is omnipotency in his word, both of command and promise; therefore called, "The word of his power." Heb. i. 3. One word of his can do more in an instant than the united powers of heaven and earth can do to eternity. This consideration removes at once the chief discouragements that hinder the lively actings of faith; for what is it that weakens our confidence of the promises' performance, but because we look upon the accomplishment as uncertain or difficult, or future and afar off! Now from hence faith may conclude the performance is certain, easy, and present.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 7.—"*He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap,*" etc. "God called the gathering together of the waters, seas." Gen. i. 10. This unstable element must, like all other elements, be put under law, and confined within bounds, that there might be a habitable earth for man and all the creatures around him. Thus the psalmist sings, "*He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.*" The boundary was such as to cause his servants to wonder. They looked from the shore, as we do, and under the influence of a well-known law, the billows in their heaving swells, seemed as if they would, as if they did, touch the sky itself; and as if they were so much higher than the shore, that they were in danger of leaving their basin and stretching over the land. Just such an impression, we, with all our science, popularly hold. The prophets thus looked as we do, and under the same kind of feeling. How wonderful, they thought, is all this! A low barrier of sand is made Jehovah's agent for bounding the deep. "The Lord hath placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it." Jer. v. 22.—*John Duns, D.D., in "Science and Christian Thought,"* 1868.

Verse 7.—"*The waters of the sea.*" Of all objects that I have ever seen, there is none which affects my imagination so much as the sea or ocean. I cannot see the heavings of this prodigious bulk of waters, even in a calm, without a very pleasing astonishment; but when it is worked up in a tempest, so that the horizon on every side is nothing but foaming billows and floating mountains, it is impossible to describe the agreeable horror that rises from such a prospect. A troubled ocean, to a man who sails upon it, is, I think, the biggest object that he can see in motion, and consequently gives his imagination one of the highest kinds of pleasure that can arise from greatness. I must confess it is impossible for me to survey this world of fluid matter without thinking on the hand that first poured it out, and made a proper channel for its reception. Such an object naturally raises in my thoughts the idea of an Almighty Being, and convinces me of his existence as much as a metaphysical demonstration. The imagination prompts the understanding, and by the greatness of the sensible object, produces in it the idea of a Being who is neither circumscribed by time nor space.—*Spectator.*

Verse 7.—"*As a heap.*" Dealing with fluids as if they were solids, with an obvious allusion to Ex. xv. 8. "*Depths,*" masses of water. The main point of

the description is God's handling these vast liquid masses, as men handle solid substances of moderate dimensions, heaping the waves up, and storing them away, as men might do with stones or wheat.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 7.—The vast masses of waters which had hitherto covered the entire surface of the globe, was on the third day of creation brought within narrower compass, and large tracts of the submerged earth reclaimed and rendered habitable ground. . . . . The waters were, *for the most part*, congregated together in one vast body, instead of being universally diffused over the face of the earth. This is the state of things which we now contemplate; the various great seas and oceans constituting in fact but one body of water called in different regions by different names, as the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Southern, etc., oceans.—*George Bush*, on Gen. i. 9.

Verse 8.—"*Let all the earth.*" For who can doubt that God can do as he wills upon earth, since he so tamed the unconquerable nature of the sea?—*Hugo Grotius*, 1583—1645.

Verse 8.—"*Let all the earth fear the Lord,*" etc. Let them not fear another instead of him. Doth a wild beast rage? Fear God. Doth a serpent lie in wait? Fear God. Doth man hate thee? Fear God. Doth the devil fight against thee? Fear God. For the whole creation is under him whom thou art commanded to fear.—*Augustine.*

Verse 9.—"*He spake and it was done.*" As we say in Latin, *Dictum factum*, SAID DONE, no delay having interposed.—*Hugo Grotius.*

Verse 9.—"*He spake, and it was done;*" so that the creatures were not emanations from the divine nature, but effects of the divine will, the fruits of intelligence, and design, and counsel.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 10.—"*The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought,*" etc. The more the Pharisees of old, and their successors the prelates of late, opposed the truth, the more it prevailed. The Reformation in Germany was much furthered by the Papists' opposition; yea, when two kings (amongst many others), wrote against Luther, namely, Henry VIII. of England, and Ludovicus of Hungary, this kingly title being entered into the controversy (making men more curious to examine the matter), stirred up a general inclination towards Luther's opinions.—*Richard Younge's Christian Library*, 1655.

Verse 11.—"*The counsel of the Lord.*" Note the contrast between the counsel of the heathen in the last verse, and the counsel of the Lord in this.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 11.—"*The thoughts.*" The same word as *devices* in the preceding verse.—*William de Burgh, D.D., in loc.*

Verse 11.—The wheels in a watch or a clock move contrary one to another, some one way, some another, yet all serve the intent of the workman, to show the time, or to make the clock strike. So in the world, the providence of God may seem to run cross to his promises; one man takes this way, another runs that way; good men go one way, wicked men another, yet all in conclusion accomplish the will, and centre in the purpose of God the great Creator of all things.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 11 (*last clause*).—Think not, brethren, because he said, "*The thoughts of his heart,*" that God as it were sitteth down and thinketh what he should do, and taketh counsel to do anything, or not to do anything. To thee, O man, belongs such tardiness.—*Augustine.*

Verse 12.—"*Blessed—whom he hath chosen.*" A man may have his name set down in the chronicles, yet lost; wrought in durable marble, yet perish; set upon a monument equal to a Colossus, yet be ignominious; inscribed on the hospital gates, yet go to hell; written in the front of his own house, yet another come to possess it; all these are but writings in the dust, or upon the waters,

where the characters perish so soon as they are made ; they no more prove a man happy than the fool could prove Pontius Pilate because his name was written in the Creed. But the true comfort is this, when a man by assurance can conclude with his own soul that his name is written in those eternal leaves of heaven, in the book of God's election, which shall never be wrapped up in the cloudy sheets of darkness but remain legible to all eternity.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12.—"*The people whom he hath chosen.*" Some read it, The people which hath chosen him for their inheritance. It cometh all to one. See Deut. xxvi. 17—19.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 12.—It's an happiness to have an interest in one greater than ourselves ; an interest in a beggar is of no worth, because he is of no power ; but interest in a prince all men seek, therefore it is said, "*Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.*"—*Joseph Symonds.*

Verse 12.—Lest it should be thought that men obtain so great a good by their own efforts and industry, David teaches us expressly that it proceeds from the fountain of God's gracious electing love that we are accounted the people of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 12.—I have sometimes compared the *great* men of the world, and the *good* men of the world to the *consonants* and *vowels* in the alphabet. The *consonants* are the most and the biggest letters ; they take up most room, and carry the greatest bulk ; but, believe it, the *vowels* though they are the fewest and least of all the letters, yet they are most useful ; they give the greatest sound of all ; there is no pronunciation without vowels. O beloved, though the *great* men of the world take up room, and make a show above others, yet they are but *consonants*, a company of mute and dumb *consonants* for the most part ; the *good men* they are the *vowels* that are of the greatest use and most concernment at every turn : *a good man* to help with his prayers ; *a good man* to advise with his counsels ; *a good man* to interpose with his authority ; this is the loss we lament, we have lost *a good man ;* death has blotted out a *vowel ;* and I fear me there will be much silence where he is lacking ; silence in the bed, and silence in the house, and silence in the shop, and silence in the church, and silence in the parish, for he was everywhere a *vowel*, *a good man* in every respect.—*John Kitchin, M.A., in a Funeral Sermon,* 1660.

Verse 15.—"*He fashioneth their hearts alike.*" As an illustration of the passage as it stands in our version, we append the following :—"Every circumstance concurs in proving that mankind are not composed of species essentially different from each other ; that, on the contrary, there was originally but one species, which, after multiplying and spreading over the whole surface of the earth, has undergone various changes, from the influence of climate, food, mode of living, diseases, and mixture of dissimilar individuals ; that at first these changes were not so conspicuous, and produced only individual varieties ; that these varieties became afterwards more specific, because they were rendered more general, more strongly marked, and more permanent, by the continual action of the same causes ; and that they are transmitted from generation to generation."—*G. L. Leclerc, Comte de Buffon,* 1707—1788.

Verse 15.—The Creator of all things "*fashioneth their hearts alike ;*" the word יחד, which signifies together at once, intimating that the hearts of all men though separated from one another by never so vast a gulf of time or place, are as exactly alike in respect of their original inclinations, as if they had been all moulded at the same time. The worship of a God and then some kind of religion, is necessary to us, we cannot shift it off.—*William Pinke,* 1631.

Verse 15 (*last clause*).—Two men give to the poor, one seeketh his reward in heaven, the other the praise of men. Thou in two seest one thing, God understandeth two. For he understandeth what is within, and knoweth what is within ; their ends he seeth, their base intentions he seeth. "*He understandeth all their works.*"—*Augustine.*

Verse 16.—"*There is no king saved by the multitude of an host.*" At the battle of Arbela, the Persian hosts numbered between five hundred thousand and a million men, but they were utterly put to the rout by Alexander's band of fifty thousand; and the once mighty Darius was soon vanquished. Napoleon led more than half a million of men into Russia—

> "Not such the numbers, nor the host so dread,
> By northern Bren, or Scythian Timour led."

But the terrible winter left the army a mere wreck, and their leader was soon a prisoner on the lone rock of St. Helena. All along the line of history this verse has been verified. The strongest battalions melt like snowflakes when God is against them.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 16.—"*A mighty man;*" or, *a giant;* Goliath for instance. As the most skilful swimmers are often drowned, so here.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 16, 17:—

> Not the chief his serried lances,
> Not his strength secures the brave;
> All in vain the war-horse prances,
> Weak his force his lord to save.
>
> *Richard Mant.*

Verses 16, 17.—The weakness and insufficiency of all human *power*, however great, as before of all human *intellect.*—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 16, 17.—As a passenger in a storm, that for shelter against the weather, steppeth out of the way, betaketh him to a fair spread oak, standeth under the boughs, with his back close to the body of it, and findeth good relief thereby for the space of some time; till at length cometh a sudden gust of wind, that teareth down a main arm of it, which falling upon the poor passenger, either maimeth or mischieveth him that resorted to it for succour. Thus falleth it out with not a few, meeting in the world with many troubles, and with manifold vexations, they step aside out of their own way, and too, too often out of God's, to get under the wing of some great one, and gain, it may be, some aid and shelter thereby for a season; but after awhile, that great one himself coming down headlong, and falling from his former height of favour, or honour, they are also called in question, and to fall together with him, that might otherwise have stood long enough on their own legs, if they had not trusted to such an arm of flesh, such a broken staff that deceived them.—*Thomas Gataker.*

Verse 17.—"*An horse.*" If the strength of horses be of God, or be his gift (Job xxxix. 19), then trust not in the strength of horses: use the strength of horses, but do not trust the strength of horses. If you trust that strength which God hath given to horses, you make them your god. How often doth God forbid trusting in the strength of horses, as knowing that we are apt to trust in anything that is strong, though but a beast. "*An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*" As if God had said, you think a horse can save you, but know he is a vain thing. And when the psalmist saith, "A horse is a vain thing," he doth not mean it of a weak horse, but of a horse of the greatest strength imaginable; such a horse is a vain thing to save a man, neither can he deliver any by his strength; and therefore the Lord, when he promised great deliverances to his people, lest they should expect it by the strength of horses, saith (Hos. i. 7), "I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen;" as if he had told them, do not look after creature strength to be saved by; a horse will be a vain thing to save you, and I can save you effectually without horses, and I will.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 17—20.—Man is sensible of his want of earthly blessings, and will never cease, with excessive care, diligence, and vexation, to hunt after them, till he come to know that God will provide for him. When one hath great friends which they are known to lean upon, we say of them, such need take no care, they know such-and-such will see to them. On the contrary, come to one who knows no end of toiling and caring, ask him, Why will you thus tire yourself out?

He will answer, I must needs do it, I have none but myself to trust to. So Christ followeth his disciples' carefulness to this door, their unbelief, which did not let them consider our heavenly Father cared for them. No present estate, though never so great, can free the heart from distraction, because it is subject to decay and vanishing; we shall never cast the burden of care off our own shoulders, till we learn by faith to cast it upon the Lord, whose eye is over us for good. He will never renounce carnal supports who makes not God the stay of his soul for outward things. He will trust in the abundance of his riches, wisdom, friends, or strength, that makes not God his strength. The heart of man, being aware of his inability to sustain himself if he be not underset, will seek out some prop, true or false, sound or rotten, to lean unto. They will go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, who look not to the Holy One of Israel, and seek not the Lord.—*John Ball.*

Verse 18.—"*Behold,*" etc. Hitherto he had given a proof of God's providence, towards *all men*, but now he descends to a particular proof of it, by his care over his *church*, which he wonderfully guides, defends, and protects in all dangers and assaults; and that notice may be taken of it, he begins with, "*Behold!*"—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 18.—"*The eye of the Lord is upon.*" Look upon the sun, how it casts light and heat upon the whole world in its general course, how it shineth upon the good and the bad with an equal influence; but let its beams be but concentrated in a burning-glass, then it sets fire on the object only, and passeth by all others: and thus God in the creation looketh upon all his works with a general love, *erant omnia valde bona*, they pleased him very well. Oh! but when he is pleased to cast the beams of his love, and cause them to shine upon his elect through Christ, then it is that their hearts burn within them, then it is that their affections are inflamed; whereas others are but as it were a little warmed, have a little shine of common graces cast upon them.—*Richard Holdsworth*, 1651.

Verse 18.—"*Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.*" This is a very encouraging character. They who cannot claim the higher distinctions of religion, may surely know that they "fear God, and hope in his mercy." Some may wonder at the combination; and suppose that the qualities are incompatible with each other. But the first Christians "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost." They may think that the fear will injure the hope, or the hope the fear. But these are even mutually helpful; and they are, not only never so beautiful, but never so influential as when they are blended. The fear promotes hope by the evidence it affords; and by keeping us from loose and careless walking, which must always affect our peace and pleasure. And hope no less befriends this fear. For never is God seen so glorious, so worthy of all our devotedness to him as when we hope in his mercy; and even the more assured we are of his regard, the more we shall enquire, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? The more we shall tremble at the thought of offending and grieving him, the more we shall continue upon our knees praying, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, *my* Strength and *my* Redeemer." It is called "a lively hope:" and Christians know, by experience, that upon all their principles and duties it has the same influence as Spring has upon the fields and the gardens.—*William Jay.*

Verse 18.—"*Who hope in his mercy.*" When thou canst not get assurance, make as much improvement of the grounds upon which thou mayst build *hopes* of salvation. The probable grounds thou hast, thou wouldst not part with for all the world. If thy heart is not full of joy through sense of God's love, yet thine eyes are full of tears, and thy soul full of sorrow, through the sense of thy sin: wouldst thou change thy condition with any hypocrite whatsoever, with the richest man that hath no grace? I would not have thee rest satisfied with

a probability, but yet bless God for a probability of salvation. Is it nothing that one that hath deserved hell most certainly, should have a probability that he should escape it? Would not this be a little ease to the torments of the damned, if they had but a strong probability that they should be saved? but *no hope* makes it heavy. When thou art sick, thou enquirest of the physician, Sir, what do you think of me? Shall I live, or shall I die? If he reply it is not certain, but there is *good hopes*, it is probable you will live and do well; this is some support unto thee in thy sickness.—*Thomas Doolittel, M.A.* (1630—1707), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 18.—The weakest believer, the least of saints, hath ground to hope. The gospel is so ordered, the covenant so methodised, God hath made such ample provision, that every one may "have good hope through grace" (1 Thess. ii. 16); and all that bear this character are allowed, encouraged, nay, commanded to hope: their hoping is as mighty a pleasure to God, as it is a comfort to themselves.—*Samuel Doolittle's* "*Righteous Man's Hope in Death,*" 1693.

Verses 18, 19.—During the siege of Rochelle, which was endured with unexampled bravery for nearly fifteen months, the inhabitants were reduced by famine to the misery of being obliged to have recourse to the flesh of horses, asses, mules, dogs, cats, rats, and mice; and a single peck of corn is said to have been sold for a sum equivalent to about twenty-five pounds sterling of our money in the present day. There were numerous examples of great and liberal generosity among the inhabitants. Some dispensed their charity so secretly that their names were never discovered. Among the rest, the following example is narrated:—"The Sieur de la Goute, an honorary king's advocate, had a sister, the widow of a merchant named Prosni, who, being a very religious and benevolent woman, at the time when the famine became more severe than it had before been, freely assisted the poor with her present surplus. Her sister-in-law, the wife of her brother, De la Goute, being differently inclined, reproved her for her conduct, asking her in anger, 'What she would do when all should be expended?' Her reply was, 'My sister, *the Lord will provide for me.*' The siege was continued, and the famine increased its fearful ravages; and poor widow Prosni, who had four children, found herself in a great strait—all her store of provisions being exhausted. She applied to her sister for relief, who, in the stead of comforting, reproached her for her improvidence; tauntingly adding that, as she had done mighty well to be so reduced under all her great faith and fine words, that '*the Lord would provide for her,*' so in good time he might provide for her.

"Wounded to the heart by these words, poor widow Prosni returned to her house in sad distress; resolving nevertheless to meet death patiently. On reaching her home, her children met her with gladdened hearts and joyous faces, and told her that a man, to them an entire stranger, had knocked at the door, it being late; and, on its being opened, he threw in a sack of about two bushels of wheat; and then, without saying a word, suddenly departed.

"The widow Prosni, scarcely able to believe her own eyes, with an overflowing, grateful heart towards her gracious benefactor, immediately ran to her sister-in-law as quickly as her famished condition would allow; and, upon seeing her, exclaimed aloud, '*My sister, the Lord* HATH *provided for me;*' and, saying no more, returned home again.

"By means of this unexpected relief, conveyed to her so opportunely, she was enabled to support herself and family until the end of the siege, and she never knew to whom she was instrumentally indebted for this timely and merciful assistance."—*The Biblical Treasury, Vol.* ix.

Verse 20.—"*Our soul waiteth for the Lord.*" There is an emphasis on the word *soul* which should be attended to; for although this is a common mode of speech among the Hebrews, yet it expresses earnest affection; as if believers should say, We sincerely rely upon God with our whole heart, accounting him our shield and help.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 20.—"*Our soul.*" Not our souls, but "*our soul,*" as if they all had only one. And what is the language of God by the prophet? "I will give them one heart and one way." And thus the two disciples going to Emmaus exclaimed, upon their discovery and surprise, "Did not our heart burn within us?" And thus in the beginning of the gospel it was said, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul." We have seen several drops of water on the table, by being brought to touch, running into one. If Christians were better acquainted with each other, they would easily unite.—*William Jay.*

Verse 20.—"*He is our help.*"—Antigonus, king of Syria, being ready to give battle near the Isle of Andreos, sent out a squadron to watch the motions of his enemies, and to descry their strength: return was made that they had more ships, and better manned than he was. "How?" says Antigonus, "that cannot be; *quam multis meipsum opponis* (for how many dost thou reckon me?)" intimating that the dignity of a general weighed down many others, especially when poised with valour and experience. And where is valour, where is experience to be found, if not in God? He is the Lord of Hosts; with him alone is strength and power to deliver Israel out of all her troubles. He may do it, he can do it, he will do it; he is wise in heart and mighty in strength; besides him there is no Saviour, no deliverer; he is a shield to the righteous, strength to the weak, a refuge to the oppressed. He is *instar omnium* (all in all), and who is like unto him in all the world?—*John Spencer.*

Verse 20.—There is an excellent story of a young man, that was at sea in a mighty raging tempest; and when all the passengers were at their wits' end for fear, he only was merry; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered, "That the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew his father would have a care of him." The great and wise God, who is our Father, hath from all eternity decreed what shall be the issue of all wars, what the event of all troubles; he is our pilot, he sits at the stern; and though the ship of the church or state be in a sinking condition, yet be of good comfort, our Pilot will have a care of us. There is nothing done in the lower house of Parliament on earth, but what is first decreed in the higher house in heaven. All the lesser wheels are ordered and overruled by the upper. Are not five sparrows, saith Christ, sold for a farthing? One sparrow is not worth half a farthing. And there's no man shall have half a farthing's worth of harm more than God hath decreed from all eternity.—*Edmund Calamy.*

Verse 22.—"*According as we hope in thee;*" not according to any merits of theirs, but according to the measure of grace, of the grace of hope which God had bestowed on them, and encouraged them to exercise on him, in expectation of finding grace and mercy with him.—*John Gill.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is *eucharistic:* the contents are:—I. *an exhortation to praise God* (1, 2, 3). II. The *arguments* to enforce the duty (4—19). III. The *confidence* of God's people in his name, their happiness, and petition. (20—22).—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—Rejoicing—the soul of praise; the Lord—a well-spring of joy. Character—indispensable to true enjoyment.

Verse 1 (*last clause.*)—*Praise comely. What?* Vocal, meditative, habitual praise. *Why?* It is comely as wings to an angel, we mount with it; as flowers to a tree, it is our fruit; as a robe to a priest, it is our office; as long hair to a woman, it is our beauty; as a crown to a king, it is our highest honour. *When?* Evermore, but chiefly amid blasphemy, persecution, sickness, poverty, death. *Whom?* Not from the ungodly, hypocritical, or thoughtless. To be without praise is to miss our comeliest adornment.

Verse 2.—Instrumental music. Is it lawful? Is it expedient? If so, its uses, limits, and laws. A sermon to improve congregational music.

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—The duty of maintaining the freshness of our devotions.

Freshness, skill, and heartiness, to be combined in our congregational psalmody.

Verse 4.—God's word and works, their rightness, and agreement, and our view of both.

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—The word doctrinal, preceptive, historical, prophetic, promissory, and experimental, always right, *i.e.*, free from error or evil.

Verse 4 (*second clause*).—God's work of creation, providence, and grace, always in conformity with truth. His hatred of everything like a sham.

Verses 4, 5.—A fourfold argument for praise, from the *truth*, the *faithfulness*, the *justice*, and *goodness* of God: I. "*For the word of the Lord is right.*" II. "*All his works are done in truth.*" III. "*He loveth righteousness and judgment.*" IV. "*The earth is full of his goodness.*"—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5.—Justice and goodness equally conspicuous in the divine action.

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—A matchless theme for an observant eye and an eloquent tongue.

Verse 6.—The power of the Word and the Spirit in the old and new creations.

Verse 7.—God's control of destructive and re-constructive agencies.

Verse 7.—The storehouses of the Great Husbandman.

Verse 8.—Reasons for universal worship, obstacles to it, future prospects of it, our duty in relation to it.

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—Awe—the soul of worship.

Verse 9.—*The irresistible word of Jehovah* in creation, in calling his people, in their comfort and deliverance, in their entrance to glory.

Verse 10.—Educated and philosophical heathen within the reach of missions.

Verses 10, 11.—The opposing counsels.

Verse 11.—The eternity, immutability, efficiency, and wisdom of the divine decrees. God's purposes, "the thoughts of his heart," hence their wisdom, and yet more their love.

Verse 12.—Two elections made by a blessed people and a gracious God, and their happy result.

The happiness of the church of God.

God's delight in his people, and their delight in him.

Verse 13.—Omniscience and its lessons.

Verses 13, 14, 15.—The doctrine of providence.

Verse 15.—God's acquaintance with men's hearts, and his estimate of their actions.

The similarity of human nature.

Verses 16, 17, 18.—The fallacy of human trust, and the security of faith in God.

Verse 18.—Hoping in the mercy of God—false and true forms distinguished.

Verse 18.—I. The eyes of God's *knowledge* are upon them. II. The eyes of his *affection* are upon them. III. The eyes of his *providence* are upon them.—*William Jay.*

Verse 19.—Life in famine, natural and spiritual, especially a famine of inward hope and legal satisfaction.

Verse 20.—"*Waiting for the Lord*," includes: I. *Conviction*—a persuasion that the Lord is the supreme good. II. *Desire*—it is expressed by hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc. III. *Hope.* IV. *Patience.*—God is never slack concerning his promise.—*William Jay.*

Verse 20 (*first clause*).—The believer's hourly position.

Verse 21.—Joy, the outflow of faith.

Verse 22.—A prayer for believers only.

Verse 22.—Measure for measure, or mercy proportioned to faith.

PSALM XXXIV.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. *Of this transaction, which reflects no credit upon David's memory, we have a brief account in* 1 Samuel xxi. *Although the gratitude of the psalmist prompted him thankfully to record the goodness of the Lord in vouchsafing an undeserved deliverance, yet he weaves none of the incidents of the escape into the narrative, but dwells only on the grand fact of his being heard in the hour of peril. We may learn from his example not to parade our sins before others, as certain vainglorious professors are wont to do who seem as proud of their sins as old Greenwich pensioners of their battles and their wounds. David played the fool with singular dexterity, but he was not so real a fool as to sing of his own exploits of folly. In the original, the title does not teach us that the psalmist composed this poem at the time of his escape from Achish, the king or Abimelech of Gath, but that it is intended to commemorate that event, and was suggested by it. It is well to mark our mercies with well carved memorials. God deserves our best handiwork. David in view of the special peril from which he was rescued, was at great pains with this Psalm, and wrote it with considerable regularity, in almost exact accordance with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This is the second alphabetical Psalm, the twenty-fifth being the first.*

DIVISION.—*The Psalm is split into two great divisions at the close of verse* 10, *when the Psalmist having expressed his praise to God turns in direct address to men. The first ten verses are* A HYMN, *and the last twelve* A SERMON. *For further assistance to the reader we may subdivide thus: In verses* 1 *to* 3, *David vows to bless the Lord, and invites the praise of others; from* 4 *to* 7 *he relates his experience, and in* 8, 9, 10, *exhorts the godly to constancy of faith. In verses* 11 *to* 14, *he gives direct exhortation, and follows it up by didactic teaching from verses* 15 *to the close.*

EXPOSITION.

I WILL bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof,* and be glad.

3 O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

1. "*I will bless the Lord at all times.*"—He is resolved and fixed, "*I will;*" he is personally and for himself determined, let others do as they may; he is intelligent in head and inflamed in heart—he knows to whom the praise is due, and what is due, and for what and when. To Jehovah, and not to second causes our gratitude is to be rendered. The Lord hath by right a monopoly in his creatures' praise. Even when a mercy may remind us of our sin with regard to it, as in this case David's deliverance from the Philistine monarch was sure to do, we are not to rob God of his meed of honour because our conscience justly awards a censure to our share in the transaction. Though the hook was rusty, yet God sent the fish, and we thank him for it. "*At all times,*" in every situation, under every circumstance, before, in and after trials, in bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear. He would never have done praising, because never satisfied that he had done enough; always feeling that he fell short of the Lord's deservings. Happy is he whose fingers are wedded to his harp. He who praises God for mercies shall never want a mercy for which to praise. To bless the Lord is never unseasonable. "*His praise shall continually be in my mouth,*" not in my heart merely, but in my mouth too. Our thankfulness is not to be a dumb thing; it should be one of the daughters of music. Our tongue is our glory, and it ought to reveal the glory of God. What a

blessed mouthful is God's praise! How sweet, how purifying, how perfuming! If men's mouths were always thus filled, there would be no repining against God, or slander of neighbours. If we continually rolled this dainty morsel under our tongue, the bitterness of daily affliction would be swallowed up in joy. God deserves blessing with the heart, and extolling with the mouth—good thoughts in the closet, and good words in the world.

2. "*My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.*" Boasting is a very natural propensity, and if it were used as in this case, the more it were indulged the better. The exultation of this verse is no mere tongue bragging, "*the soul*" is in it, the boasting is meant and felt before it is expressed. What scope there is for holy boasting in Jehovah! His person, attributes, covenant, promises, works, and a thousand things besides, are all incomparable, unparalleled, matchless; we may cry them up as we please, but we shall never be convicted of vain and empty speech in so doing. Truly he who writes these words of comment has nothing of his own to boast of, but much to lament over, and yet none shall stop him of his boast in God so long as he lives. "*The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.*" They are usually grieved to hear boastings; they turn aside from vauntings and lofty speeches, but boasting in the Lord is quite another matter; by this the most lowly are consoled and encouraged. The confident expressions of tried believers are a rich solace to their brethren of less experience. We ought to talk of the Lord's goodness on purpose that others may be confirmed in their trust in a faithful God.

3. "*O magnify the Lord with me.*" Is this request addressed to the humble? If so it is most fitting. Who can make God great but those who feel themselves to be little? He bids them help him to make the Lord's fame greater among the sons of men. Jehovah is infinite, and therefore cannot really be made greater, but his name grows in manifested glory as he is made known to his creatures, and thus he is said to be magnified. It is well when the soul feels its own inability adequately to glorify the Lord, and therefore stirs up others to the gracious work; this is good both for the man himself and for his companions. No praise can excel that which lays us prostrate under a sense of our own nothingness, while divine grace like some topless Alp rises before our eyes, and sinks us lower and lower in holy awe. "*Let us exalt his name together.*" Social, congregated worship is the outgrowth of one of the natural instincts of the new life. In heaven it is enjoyed to the full, and earth is likest heaven where it abounds.

4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

4. "*I sought the Lord, and he heard me.*" It must have been in a very confused manner that David prayed, and there must have been much of self-sufficiency in his prayer, or he would not have resorted to methods of such dubious morality as pretending to be mad and behaving as a lunatic; yet his poor limping prayer had an acceptance and brought him succour: the more reason for then celebrating the abounding mercy of the Lord. We may seek God even when we have sinned. If sin could blockade the mercy-seat it would be all over with us, but the mercy is that there are gifts even for the rebellious, and an advocate for men who sin. "*And delivered me from all my fears.*" God makes a perfect work of it. He clears away both our fears and their causes, all of them without exception. Glory be to his name, prayer sweeps

the field, slays all the enemies and even buries their bones. Note the egoism of this verse and of those preceding it; we need not blush to speak of ourselves when in so doing we honestly aim at glorifying God, and not at exalting ourselves. Some are foolishly squeamish upon this point, but they should remember that when modesty robs God it is most immodest.

5. "*They looked unto him, and were lightened.*" The psalmist avows that his case was not at all peculiar, it was matched in the lives of all the faithful; they too, each one of them on looking to their Lord were brightened up, their faces began to shine, their spirits were uplifted. What a means of blessing one look at the Lord may be! There is life, light, liberty, love, everything in fact, in a look at the crucified One. Never did a sore heart look in vain to the good Physician; never a dying soul turned its darkening eye to the brazen serpent to find its virtue gone. "*And their faces were not ashamed.*" Their faces were covered with joy but not with blushes. He who trusts in God has no need to be ashamed of his confidence, time and eternity will both justify his reliance.

6. "*This poor man cried.*" Here he returns to his own case. He was poor indeed, and so utterly friendless that his life was in great jeopardy; but he cried in his heart to the protector of his people and found relief. His prayer was a cry, for brevity and bitterness, for earnestness and simplicity, for artlessness and grief; it was a poor man's cry, but it was none the less powerful with heaven, for "*the Lord heard him,*" and to be heard of God is to be delivered; and so it is added the Lord "*saved him out of all his troubles.*" At once and altogether David was clean rid of all his woes. The Lord sweeps our griefs away as men destroy a hive of hornets, or as the winds clear away the mists. Prayer can clear us of troubles as easily as the Lord made riddance of the frogs and flies of Egypt when Moses entreated him. This verse is the psalmist's own personal testimony: he being dead yet speaketh. Let the afflicted reader take heart and be of good courage.

7. "*The angel of the Lord.*" The covenant angel, the Lord Jesus, at the head of all the bands of heaven, surrounds with his army the dwellings of the saints. Like hosts entrenched so are the ministering spirits encamped around the Lord's chosen, to serve and succour, to defend and console them. "*Encampeth round about them that fear him.*" On every side the watch is kept by warriors of sleepless eyes, and the Captain of the host is one whose prowess none can resist. "*And delivereth them.*" We little know how many providential deliverances we owe to those unseen hands which are charged to bear us up lest we dash our foot against a stone.

8 O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him.

9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him.

10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*.

8. "*O taste and see.*" Make a trial, an inward, experimental trial of the goodness of God. You cannot see except by tasting for yourself; but if you taste you shall see, for this, like Jonathan's honey, enlightens the eyes. "*That the Lord is good.*" You can only know this really and personally by experience. There is the banquet with its oxen and fatlings; its fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined; but their sweetness will be all unknown to you except you make the blessings of grace your own, by a living, inward, vital participation in them. "*Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*" Faith is the soul's taste; they who test the Lord by their confidence always find him good, and they become themselves blessed. The second clause of the verse, is the argument in support of the exhortation contained in the first sentence,

9. *O fear the Lord, ye his saints.*" Pay to him humble childlike reverence, walk in his laws, have respect to his will, tremble to offend him, hasten to

serve him. Fear not the wrath of men, neither be tempted to sin through the virulence of their threats ; fear God and fear nothing else. "*For there is no want to them that fear him.*" Jehovah will not allow his faithful servants to starve. He may not give luxuries, but the promise binds him to supply necessaries, and he will not run back from his word. Many whims and wishes may remain ungratified, but real wants the Lord will supply. The fear of the Lord or true piety is not only the duty of those who avow themselves to be saints, that is, persons set apart and consecrated for holy duties, but it is also their path of safety and comfort. Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is. If we were to die like dogs, and there were no hereafter, yet were it well for our own happiness' sake to fear the Lord. Men seek a patron and hope to prosper ; he prospers surely who hath the Lord of Hosts to be his friend and defender.

10. "*The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger.*" They are fierce, cunning, strong, in all the vigour of youth, and yet they sometimes howl in their ravenous hunger, and even so crafty, designing, and oppressing men, with all their sagacity and unscrupulousness, often come to want ; yet simple-minded believers, who dare not act as the greedy lions of earth, are fed with food convenient for them. To trust God is better policy than the craftiest politicians can teach or practice. "*But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*" No really good thing shall be denied to those whose first and main end in life is to seek the Lord. Men may call them fools, but the Lord will prove them wise. They shall win where the world's wiseacres lose their all, and God shall have the glory of it.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 What man *is he that* desireth life, *and* loveth *many* days, that he may see good ?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good ; seek peace, and pursue it.

11. "*Come, ye children.*" Though a warrior and a king, the psalmist was not ashamed to teach children. Teachers of youth belong to the true peerage ; their work is honourable, and their reward shall be glorious. Perhaps the boys and girls of Gath had made sport of David in his seeming madness, and if so, he here aims by teaching the rising race to undo the mischief which he had done aforetime. Children are the most hopeful persons to teach—wise men who wish to propagate their principles take care to win the ear of the young. "*Hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*" So far as they can be taught by word of mouth, or learned by the hearing of the ear, we are to communicate the faith and fear of God, inculcating upon the rising generation the principles and practices of piety. This verse may be the address of every Sabbath-school teacher to his class, of every parent to his children. It is not without instruction in the art of teaching. We should be winning and attractive to the youngsters, bidding them "come," and not repelling them with harsh terms. We must get them away, apart from toys and sports, and try to occupy their minds with better pursuits ; for we cannot well teach them while their minds are full of other things. We must drive at the main point always, and keep the fear of the Lord ever uppermost in our teachings, and in so doing we may discreetly cast our own personality into the scale by narrating our own experiences and convictions.

12. Life spent in happiness is the desire of all, and he who can give the young a receipt for leading a happy life deserves to be popular among them. Mere existence is not life ; the art of living, truly, really, and joyfully living, it is not given to all men to know. To teach men how to live and how to die, is the aim of all useful religious instruction. The rewards of virtue are the baits with which the young are to be drawn to morality. While we teach piety to God we should also dwell much upon morality towards man.

13. "*Keep thy tongue from evil.*" Guard with careful diligence that dangerous member, the tongue, lest it utter evil, for that evil will recoil upon thee, and mar the enjoyment of thy life. Men cannot spit forth poison without feeling some of the venom burning their own flesh. "*And thy lips from speaking guile.*" Deceit must be very earnestly avoided by the man who desires happiness. A crafty schemer lives like a spy in the enemy's camp, in constant fear of exposure and execution. Clean and honest conversation, by keeping the conscience at ease, promotes happiness, but lying and wicked talk stuffs our pillow with thorns, and makes life a constant whirl of fear and shame. David had tried the tortuous policy, but he here denounces it, and begs others as they would live long and well to avoid with care the doubtful devices of guile.

14. "*Depart from evil.*" Go away from it. Not merely take your hands off, but yourself off. Live not near the pest-house. Avoid the lion's lair, leave the viper's nest. Set a distance between yourself and temptation. "*And do good.*" Be practical, active, energetic, persevering in good. Positive virtue promotes negative virtue; he who does good is sure to avoid evil. "*Seek peace.*" Not merely prefer it, but with zeal and care endeavour to promote it. Peace with God, with thine own heart, with thy fellow man, search after this as the merchantman after a precious pearl. Nothing can more effectually promote our own happiness than peace; strife awakens passions which eat into the heart with corroding power. Anger is murder to one's own self, as well as to its objects. "*And pursue it.*" Hunt after it, chase it with eager desire. It may soon be lost, indeed, nothing is harder to retain, but do your best, and if enmity should arise let it be no fault of yours. Follow after peace when it shuns you; be resolved not to be of a contentious spirit. The peace which you thus promote will be returned into your own bosom, and be a perennial spring of comfort to you.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry.

16 The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 *The righteous* cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

15. "*The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.*" He observes them with approval and tender consideration; they are so dear to him that he cannot take his eyes off them; he watches each one of them as carefully and intently as if there were only that one creature in the universe. "*His ears are open unto their cry.*" His eyes and ears are thus both turned by the Lord towards his saints; his whole mind is occupied about them: if slighted by all others they are not neglected by him. Their cry he hears at once, even as a mother is sure to hear her sick babe; the cry may be broken, plaintive, unhappy, feeble, unbelieving, yet the Father's quick ear catches each note of lament or appeal, and he is not slow to answer his children's voice.

16. "*The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*" God is not indifferent to the deeds of sinners, but he sets his face against them, as we say, being

determined that they shall have no countenance and support, but shall be thwarted and defeated. He is determinately resolved that the ungodly shall not prosper; he sets himself with all his might to overthrow them. "*To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*" He will stamp out their fires, their honour shall be turned into shame, their names forgotten or accursed. Utter destruction shall be the lot of all the ungodly.

17. "*The righteous cry.*" Like Israel in Egypt, they cry out under the heavy yoke of oppression, both of sin, temptation, care, and grief. "*And the Lord heareth;*" he is like the night-watchman, who no sooner hears the alarm-bell than he flies to relieve those who need him. "*And delivereth them out of all their troubles.*" No net of trouble can so hold us that the Lord cannot free us. Our afflictions may be numerous and complicated, but prayer can set us free from them all, for the Lord will show himself strong on our behalf.

18. "*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.*" Near in friendship to accept and console. Broken hearts think God far away, when he is really most near them; their eyes are holden so that they see not their best friend. Indeed, he is with them, and in them, but they know it not. They run hither and thither, seeking peace in their own works, or in experiences, or in proposals and resolutions, whereas the Lord is nigh them, and the simple act of faith will reveal him. "*And saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*" What a blessed token for good is a repentant, mourning heart! Just when the sinner condemns himself, the Lord graciously absolves him. If we chasten our own spirits the Lord will spare us. He never breaks with the rod of judgment those who are already sore with the rod of conviction. Salvation is linked with contrition.

19. "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous.*" Thus are they made like Jesus their covenant Head. Scripture does not flatter us like the story books with the idea that goodness will secure us from trouble; on the contrary, we are again and again warned to expect tribulation while we are in this body. Our afflictions come from all points of the compass, and are as many and as tormenting as the mosquitoes of the tropics. It is the earthly portion of the elect to find thorns and briers growing in their pathway, yea, to lie down among them, finding their rest broken and disturbed by sorrow. BUT, blessed *but*, how it takes the sting out of the previous sentence! "*But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*" Through troops of ills Jehovah shall lead his redeemed scatheless and triumphant. There is an end to the believer's affliction, and a joyful end too. None of his trials can hurt so much as a hair of his head, neither can the furnace hold him for a moment after the Lord bids him come forth of it. Hard would be the lot of the righteous if this promise, like a bundle of camphire, were not bound up in it, but this sweetens all. The same Lord who sends the afflictions will also recall them when his design is accomplished, but he will never allow the fiercest of them to rend and devour his beloved.

20. "*He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*" David had come off with kicks and cuffs, but no broken bones. No substantial injury occurs to the saints. Eternity will heal all their wounds. Their real self is safe; they may have flesh-wounds, but no part of the essential fabric of their being shall be broken. This verse may refer to frequent providential protections vouchsafed to the saints; but as good men have had broken limbs as well as others, it cannot absolutely be applied to bodily preservations; but must, it seems to me, be spiritually applied to great injuries of soul, which are for ever prevented by divine love. Not a bone of the mystical body of Christ shall be broken, even as his corporeal frame was preserved intact. Divine love watches over every believer as it did over Jesus; no fatal injury shall happen to us, we shall neither be halt nor maimed in the kingdom, but shall be presented after life's trials are over without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, being preserved in Christ Jesus, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

21. "*Evil shall slay the wicked.*" Their adversities shall be killing; they are not medicine, but poison. Ungodly men only need rope enough and they will hang themselves; their own iniquities shall be their punishment. Hell itself is but evil fully developed, torturing those in whom it dwells. Oh! happy they who have fled to Jesus to find refuge from their former sins, such, and such only will escape. "*And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*" They hated the best of company, and they shall have none; they shall be forsaken, despoiled, wretched, despairing. God makes the viper poison itself. What desolation of heart do the damned feel, and how richly have they deserved it!

22. "*The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants*"—with price and with power, with blood and with water. All providential helps are a part of the redemption by power, hence the Lord is said still to redeem. All thus ransomed belong to him who bought them—this is the law of justice and the verdict of gratitude. Joyfully will we serve him who so graciously purchases us with his blood, and delivers us by his power. "*And none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*" Faith is the mark of the ransomed, and wherever it is seen, though in the least and meanest of the saints, it ensures eternal salvation. Believer, thou shalt never be deserted, forsaken, given up to ruin. God, even thy God, is thy guardian and friend, and bliss is thine.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—Abimelech was king of Gath, the same with Achish, 1 Sam. xxi. 20: who either had two names, or this of Abimelech, as it should seem, was a common name to all the kings of the Philistines (see Gen. xx. 2; xxvi. 8); as Pharaoh was to the Egyptian kings and Cæsar to the Roman emperors: the name signifies a *father-king*, or *my father-king*, or a *royal father;* as kings should be the fathers of their country: before him *David changed his behaviour*, his taste, sense, or reason; he imitated a madman.—*John Gill.*

Whole Psalm.—(This Psalm is alphabetical.) The Alphabetical Psalms, the *psalmi abcedarii*, as the Latin fathers called them, are nine in number; and I cannot help thinking it is a pity that, except in the single instance of the hundred and nineteenth, no hint of their existence should have been suffered to appear in our authorised version. I will not take it upon me to affirm, with Ewald, that no version is faithful in which the acrostic is suppressed; but I do think that the existence of such a remarkable style of composition ought to be indicated in one way or another, and that some useful purposes are served by its being actually reproduced in the translation. No doubt there are difficulties in the way. The Hebrew alphabet differs widely from any of those now employed in Europe. Besides differences of a more fundamental kind, the Hebrew has only twenty-two letters for our twenty-six; and of the twenty-two, a considerable number have no fellows in ours. An exact reproduction of a Hebrew acrostic in an English version is therefore impossible.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

Whole Psalm.—Mr. Hapstone has endeavoured to imitate the alphabetical character of this Psalm in his metrical version. The letter answering to F is wanting, and the last stanza begins with the letter answering to R. One verse of his translation may suffice—

> "At all times bless Jehovah's name will I;
> His praise shall in my mouth be constantly:
> Boast in Jehovah shall my soul henceforth;
> Hear it, ye meek ones, and exult with mirth."

Verse 1.—"*I will bless the Lord at all times.*" Mr. Bradford, martyr, speaking of Queen Mary, at whose cruel mercy he then lay, said, If the queen be pleased to release me, I will thank her; if she will imprison me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her, etc. So saith a believing soul: Let God do with me what he will, I will be thankful.—*Samuel Clarke's "Mirrour."*

Verse 1.—Should the whole frame of nature be unhinged, and all outward friends and supporters prove false and deceitful, our worldly hopes and schemes be disappointed, and possessions torn from us, and the floods of sickness, poverty, and disgrace overwhelm our soul with an impetuous tide of trouble; the sincere lover of God, finding that none of these affects his portion and the object of his panting desires, retires from them all to God his refuge and hiding place, and there feels his Saviour incomparably better, and more than equivalent to what the whole of the universe can ever offer, or rob him of; and his tender mercies, unexhausted fulness, and great faithfulness, yield him consolation and rest; and enable him, what time he is afraid, to put his trust in him. Thus we find the holy psalmist expressing himself: "*I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*"—*William Dunlop.*

Verse 1.—S. Basil tells us that the praise of God, once rightly impressed as a seal on the mind, though it may not always be carried out into action, yet in real truth causes us perpetually to praise God.—*J. M. Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 2.—"*My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.*" Not like the boasting of the Pharisee, so hateful in the eyes of God, so offensive in the ears of the humble; for *the humble can hear this boasting and be glad*, which they would never do if it were not conformable to the rules of humility. Can any boasting be greater than to say, "I can do all things"? Yet in this boasting there is humility when I add, "In him that strengtheneth me." For though God likes not of boasting, yet he likes of this boasting, which arrogates nothing to ourselves, but ascribes all to him.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verses 2—6.—There is somewhat very striking and pleasing in the sudden transitions, and the change of persons, that is observable in these few verses. "*My soul shall boast;*" "*The humble shall hear;*" "*I sought the Lord;*" "*They looked to him;*" "*This poor man cried.*" There is a force and elegance in the very unconnection of the expressions, which, had they been more closely tied by the proper particles, would have been in a great measure lost. Things thus separated from each other, and yet accelerated, discover, as Longinus observes, the earnestness and the vehemency of the inward working of the mind; and though it may seem to interrupt, or disturb the sentence, yet quickens and enforces it.—*Samuel Chandler, D.D.*

Verse 3.—Venema remarks that after the affair with Achish, we are told in 1 Samuel xxii. 1, "His brethren, and all his father's house went down to the cave Adullam unto him," and these, together with those who were in debt, and discontented with Saul's government, formed a band of four hundred men. To these his friends and comrades, he relates the story of his escape, and bids them with united hearts and voices extol the Lord.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 4.—"*I sought the Lord, and he heard me.*" God expects to hear from you before you can expect to hear from him. If you restrain prayer, it is no wonder the mercy promised is retained. Meditation is like the lawyer's studying the case in order to his pleading at the bar; when, therefore, thou hast viewed the promise, and affected thy heart with the riches of it, then fly thee to the throne of grace, and spread it before the Lord.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 4.—"*He delivered me from all my fears.*" To have delivered me from all my troubles had been a great favour, but a far greater to deliver me from all my fears; for where that would but have freed me from present evil, this secures me from evil to come; that now I enjoy not only tranquillity, but security, a privilege only of the godly. The wicked may be free from trouble, but can they be free from fear? No; God knows, though they be not in

trouble like other men, yet they live in more fear than other men. Guiltiness of mind, or mind of the world, never suffers them to be secure : though they be free sometimes from the fit of an ague, yet they are never without a grudging ; and (if I may use the expression of poets) though they feel not always the whip of Tysiphone, yet they feel always her terrors ; and, seeing the Lord hath done this for me, hath delivered me from all my fears, have I not cause, just cause, to magnify him, and exalt his name ?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5.—"*They looked unto him.*" The more we can think upon our Lord, and the less upon ourselves, the better. Looking to him, as he is seated upon the right hand of the throne of God, will keep our heads, and especially our hearts, steady when going through the deep waters of affliction. Often have I thought of this when crossing the water opposite the old place of Langholm. I found, when I looked down on the water, I got dizzy ; I therefore fixed my eyes upon a steady object on the other side, and got comfortably through.—*David Smith,* 1792—1867.

Verse 6.—"*This poor man cried.*" The reasons of *crying* are, 1. Want cannot blush. The pinching necessity of the saints is not tied to the law of modesty. Hunger cannot be ashamed. "I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise," saith David (Ps. lv. 2) ; and Hezekiah, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter : I did mourn as a dove" (Isa. xxxviii. 14). "I went mourning without the sun : I stood up, and I cried in the congregation" (Job xxx. 28). 2. Though God hear prayer, only as prayer offered in Christ, not because very fervent ; yet fervour is a heavenly ingredient in prayer. An arrow drawn with full strength hath a speedier issue ; therefore, the prayers of the saints are expressed by *crying* in Scripture. "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not" (Ps. xxii. 2). "At noon, will I pray, and cry aloud" (Ps. lv. 17). "In my distress I cried to the Lord" (Ps. xviii. 6). "Unto thee have I cried, O Lord" (Ps. lxxxviii. 13). "Out of the depths have I cried" (Ps. cxxx. 1). "Out of the belly of hell cried I" (Jonah ii. 2). "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock" (Ps. xxviii. 1). Yea, it goeth to somewhat more than *crying :* "I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard" (Job xix. 7). "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer" (Lam. iii. 8). He who may teach us all to pray, sweet Jesus, "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" (Heb. v. 7) ; he prayed with war shouts. 3. And these prayers are so prevalent, that God answereth them : "*This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his fears*" (Ps. xxxiv. 6). "My cry came before him, even into his ears" (Ps. xviii. 6). The *cry* addeth wings to the prayer, as a speedy post sent to court upon life and death : "Our fathers cried unto thee, and were delivered" (Ps. xxii. 5). "*The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth*" (Ps. xxxiv. 17).—*Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 7.—"*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*" I will not rub the questions, whether these angels can contract themselves, and whether they can subsist in a point, and so stand together the better in so great a number, neither will I trouble myself to examine whether they are in such-and-such a place in their *substance,* or only in their *virtue* and *operation.* But this the godly man may assure himself of, that whensoever he shall want their help, in spite of doors, and locks, and bars, he may have it in a moment's warning. For there is no impediment, either for want of power because they are spirits, or from want of good will, both because it is their duty, and because they bear an affection to him ; not only rejoicing at his first conversion (Luke xv. 10), but, I dare confidently affirm, always disposed with abundance of cheerfulness to do anything for him. I cannot let pass some words I remember of Origen's to this purpose, as I have them from his interpreter. He brings in the angels speaking after this manner :—"If he

(meaning the Son of God) went down, and went down into a body, and was clothed with flesh, and endured its infirmities and died for men, what do we stand still for? Come, let's all down from heaven together."—*Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 7.—"*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.*" This is the first time that, in the psalter, we read of the ministrations of angels. But many fathers rather take this passage of the "Angel of the Great Counsel," and gloriously to him it applies.—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 7.—"*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him,*" etc. By whom may be meant, either the uncreated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of God's presence, and of the covenant, the Captain of salvation, the Leader and Commander of the people; and whose salvation is as walls and bulwarks about them, or as an army surrounding them; or a created angel may be intended, even a single one, which is sufficient to guard a multitude of saints, since one could destroy at once such a vast number of enemies, as in 2 Kings xix. 35; or one may be put for more, since they are an innumerable company that are on the side of the Lord's people, and to whom they are joined; and these may be said to encamp about them, because they are an host or army (see Gen. xxxii. 1, 2; Luke ii. 13); and are the guardians of the saints, that stand up for them and protect them, as well as minister to them.—*John Gill.*

Verse 7.—"*The angel of the Lord*" is represented in his twofold character in this pair of Psalms, as an angel of mercy, and also as an angel of judgment. Psalm xxxv. 6. This pair of Psalms (the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth), may in this respect be compared with the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where the angel of the Lord is displayed as encamping about St. Peter, and delivering him, and also as smiting the persecutor, Herod Agrippa.—*Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.*

Verse 7.—"*Round about.*" In illustration of this it may be observed, that according to D'Arvieux, it is the practice of the Arabs to pitch their tents in a circular form; the prince being in the middle, and the Arabs about him, but so as to leave a respectful distance between them. And Thevenot, describing a Turkish encampment near Cairo, having particularly noticed the spaciousness, decorations, and conveniences of the Bashaw's tent, or pavilion, adds, "Round the pale of his tent, within a pistol shot, were above two hundred tents, pitched in such a manner that the doors of them all looked towards the Bashaw's tent; and it ever is so, that they may have their eye always upon their master's lodging, and be in readiness to assist him if he be attacked."—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 8.—"*O taste and see that the Lord is good.*" Our senses help our understandings; we cannot by the most rational discourse perceive what the sweetness of honey is; *taste* it and you shall perceive it. "His fruit was sweet to my *taste.*" Dwell in the light of the Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished with his love. Get out the marrow and the fatness that thy portion yields thee. Let fools learn by beholding thy face how dim their blazes are to the brightness of thy day.—*Richard Alleine, in "Heaven Opened,"* 1665.

Verse 8.—"*O taste and see,*" etc. It is not enough for thee to see it afar off, and not have it, as Dives did; or to have it in thee, and not to taste it, as Samson's lion had great store of honey in him, but tasted no sweetness of it; but thou must as well have it as see it, and as well taste it as have it. "*O taste and see,*" says he, "*how sweet the Lord is;*" for so indeed Christ giveth his church not only *a sight* but also "*a taste*" of his sweetness. *A sight* is where he saith thus: "We will rise up early, and go into the vineyard, and see whether the vine have budded forth the small grapes, and whether the pomegranates flourish;" there is *a sight* of the vine. *A taste* is where he says thus, "I will bring thee into the wine cellar, and cause thee to drink spiced wine, and new wine of the pomegranates;" there is *a taste* of the wine. The church not only goes into the vineyard and *sees* the wine, but also goes into the wine cellar, and *tastes* the wine.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 8.—"*Taste and see.*" There are some things, especially in the depths of the religious life, which can only be understood by being experienced, and which even then are incapable of being adequately embodied in words. "*O taste and see that the Lord is good.*" The enjoyment must come before the illumination; or rather the enjoyment is the illumination. There are things that must be loved before we can know them to be worthy of our love; things to be believed before we can understand them to be worthy of belief. And even after this—after we are conscious of a distinct apprehension of some spiritual truth, we can only, perhaps, answer, if required to explain it, in the words of the philosopher to whom the question was put, "What is God?" "I know, *if I am not asked.*"—*Thomas Binney's "Sermons,"* 1869.

Verse 8.—"*Taste and see.*" Be unwilling that all the good gifts of God should be swallowed without taste, or maliciously forgotten, but use your palate, know them, and consider them.—*D. H. Mollerus.*

Verse 8.—Heaven and earth are replete with the goodness of God. We omit to open our mouths and eyes, on which account the psalmist desires us to "*taste*" and "*see.*"—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 8.—The "*taste and see*" invite, as it were, to a sumptuous feast, which has long been ready; to a rich sight openly exposed to view. The imperatives are in reality not hortatory but persuasive.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 8.—All that the believer can attain of spiritual consolation in this life is but a taste.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 8:—

> O taste the Lord, and see how sweet He is,
> The man that trusts in him lives still in bliss.
>
> *Sir John Davies*, 1569—1626.

Verses 8, 9, 10.—All these verses are beautiful representations of the fulness, suitableness, completeness, and all-sufficiency of God in Christ to answer all the wants of his people. And is there not a vast elegance in the comparison taken from the hunger and rapacity of the lion, even the impetuousness of the young lion, to that of the patience and silent waiting of the faithful believer? A life of faith will find food in everything, because it is all founded in Christ. The young lions may, and will lack, because nothing will supply their voracious appetites but that which is carnal.—*Robert Hawker.*

Verse 10.—"*The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger.*" The old lions will have it for them, if it be to be had. "*But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*" As they would feel no evil thing within, so they shall want no good thing without. He that freely opens the upper, will never wholly close the nether springs. There shall be no silver lacking in Benjamin's sack, while Joseph has it to throw in. Grace is not such a beggarly visitant, as will not pay its own way. When the best of beings is adored, the best of blessings are enjoyed.—*William Secker.*

Verse 10.—People are apt to fancy that a wild beast's life must be happy—in a brute's sense—and that the carnivorous and graminivorous creatures which have never come under the dominion of mankind are better off than the domesticated quadrupeds which buy their quieter and safer lives at the price of ministering to the luxuries or necessities of their human lords. But the contrary is the case: the career of a flesh-eating animal must be wretched, even from the tiger's or leopard's point of view. They must often suffer pangs of long-continued hunger, and when they find and kill food they frequently have to wage desperate war for the enjoyment of their victim. The cry of almost every wild beast is so melancholy and forlorn, that it impresses the traveller with sadness more even than with fear. If the opportunity occurs for watching them in the chase, they are seen to sneak and sniff about, far less like "kings of the forest," than poor, dejected, starving wretches, desperate upon the subject of their next meal. They suffer horribly from diseases induced by foul diet and

long abstinence ; and very few are found without scars in their hide—the tokens of terrible combats. If they live to old age their lot is piteous : their teeth are worn down, their claws are blunt, and in this state numbers of them perish by starvation. Not one half of the wild animals die a natural death ; and their life, so far as can be observed, is a series of stern privations, with desperate and bloody fights among themselves.—*Clipping from "Daily Telegraph."*

Verse 10.—"*They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*" There shall be no want to such, and such shall want no good thing : so that he must be such an one to whom the promise is made ; and he must also be sure that it is *good* for him which is promised. But oftentimes it is not good for a man to abound with earthly blessings ; as strong drink is not good for weak brains. Yea, if anything be wanting to a good man, he may be sure it is not good for him ; and then better that he doth want it, than that he did enjoy it ; and what wise man will complain of the want of that, which if he had, would prove more gainful than hurtful to him ? As a sword to a madman, a knife to a child, drink to them that have a fever or the dropsy. "No good thing will God withhold," etc., and therefore, not wants themselves, which to many are also good, yea, very good things, as I could reckon up many. Want sanctified is a notable means to bring to repentance, to work in us amendment of life, it stirs up prayer, it weans from the love of the world, it keeps us always prepared for the spiritual combat, discovers whether we be true believers or hypocrites, prevents greater evils of sin and punishment to come ; it makes us humble, conformable to Christ our Head, increaseth our faith, our joy, and thankfulness, our spiritual wisdom, and likewise our patience, as I have largely shown in another treatise.—*Richard Young, in the "Poor's Advocate,"* 1653.

Verse 10.—I remember as I came through the country, that there was a poor widow woman, whose husband fell at Bothwell : the bloody soldiers came to plunder her house, telling her they would take all she had. "We will leave thee nothing," said they, "either to put in thee, or on thee." "I care not," said she, "I will not want as long as God is in the heavens." That was a believer indeed.—*Alexander Peden's Sermon*, 1682.

Verse 10.—Take a survey of heaven and earth and all things therein, and whatsoever upon sure ground appears good, ask it confidently of Christ ; his love will not deny it. If it were good for you that there were no sin, no devil, no affliction, no destruction, the love of Christ would instantly abolish these. Nay, if the possession of all the kingdoms of the world were absolutely good for any saint, the love of Christ would instantly crown him monarch of them.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 10 (*last clause*).—Part of his last afternoon was spent by Columba in transcribing the Psalms of David. Having come to that passage in the thirty-fourth Psalm, where it is said, "*They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*," he said, "I have come to the end of a page, and I will stop here, for the following verse, "*Come, ye children, hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the Lord*," will better suit my successor to transcribe than me. I will leave it, therefore, to Baithen." As usual, the bell was rung at midnight for prayers. Columba was the first to hasten to church. On entering it soon after, Dermid found him on his knees in prayer, but evidently dying. Raising him up in his arms, he supported his head on his bosom. The brethren now entered. When they saw Columba in this dying condition they wept aloud. Columba heard them. He opened his eyes and attempted to speak, but his voice failed. He lifted up his hands as if to bless them, immediately after which he breathed out his spirit. His countenance retained in death the expression it wore in life, so that it seemed as if he had only fallen asleep.—"*Story of Columba and his Successors*," *in the Christian Treasury for* 1848.

Verse 11.—"*Come, ye children.*" Venema in substance remarks that David in addressing his friends in the cave, called them his sons or children, because he was about to be their teacher, and they his disciples ; and again, because

they were young men in the flower of their age, and as sons, would be the builders up of his house; and still more, because as their leader to whose discipline and command they were subject, he had a right to address them as his children.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 11.—"*Come, ye children,*" etc. You know your earthly parents, ay, but labour to know your heavenly. You know the fathers of your flesh, ay, but strive to know the Father of your spirits. You are expert it may be in Horace's Odes, Virgil's Eclogues, Cicero's Orations; oh! but strive to get understanding in David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs, and the other plain books of Holy Writ. Manna was to be gathered in the morning. The orient pearl is generated of the morning dew; *aurora musis amica*, the morning is a friend to the muses. O "*remember thy Creator,*" know him in the morning of thy childhood. When God had created the heavens and the earth, the first thing he did was to adorn the world with light, and separate it from the darkness. Happy is that child on whom the light of saving knowledge begins to dawn early. God, in the law, required the first-born, and the first-fruits, so he doth still our first days, to be offered to him. They are wisdom's words, "They that seek me early shall find me." Prov. viii. 17. Where a rabbin observeth a נ is added to the verb more than usual, which in numbering goeth for fifty. With this note, that early seeking hath not only twenty, or thirty, but fifty, nay, indeed, an hundred fold recompense attending on it.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 11.—"*Come, ye children.*" David in this latter part of the Psalm undertakes to teach children; though a man of war and anointed to be king, he did not think it below him: though now he had his head so full of cares, and his hands of business, yet he could find heart and time to give good counsel to young people from his own experience.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 11.—Observe I. What he expects from them, "*Hearken unto me,*" leave your play, lay by your toys, and hear what I have to say to you; not only give me the hearing, but observe and obey me. II. What he undertakes to teach them, "*The fear of the Lord,*" inclusive of all the duties of religion. David was a famous musician, a statesman, a soldier, but he doth not say to his children, I will teach you to play upon the harp, or to handle the sword or spear, or draw the bow, or I will teach you the maxims of state policy, but I will teach you *the fear of the Lord*, which is better than all arts and sciences, better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices. That is it which we should be solicitous both to learn ourselves, and to teach our children.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 11.—"*I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*" I shall introduce the *translation* and *paraphrase* from my old Psalter; and the rather because I believe there is a reference to that very improper and unholy method of teaching youth the system of heathen mythology before they are taught one sound lesson of true divinity, till at last their *minds* are *imbued* with *heathenism* and the vicious conduct of gods, goddesses, and heroes (here very properly called tyrants), becomes the model of their own; and they are as heathenish *without* as they are heathenish *within.*

Trans. "Cummes sones lere me: dred of Lurd I sal you lere.

Par. "Cummes, with trauth and luf: sones, qwam I gette in haly lere: heres me. With eres of hert. I sal lere you, noght the fabyls of poetes; na the storys of tyrauntz; bot the dred of oure Larde, that wyl bring you til the felaghschippe of aungels; and thar in is lyfe." I need not paraphrase this paraphrase, as it is plain enough.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 11.—"*The fear of the Lord.*" The Master of Sentences dwells, from this verse, on the four kinds of fear: mundane, servile, initial, filial. *Mundane*, when we fear to commit sin, simply lest we should lose some worldly advantage or incur some worldly inconvenience. *Servile*, when we fear to commit sin, simply because of hell torments due to it. *Initial*, when we fear to commit it, lest we should lose the happiness of heaven. *Filial*, when we fear, only and entirely because we dread to offend that God whom we love with all our hearts. "*I will teach.*" Whence notice, that this fear is not a thing to be learnt all at once; it needs

careful study and a good master. S. Chrysostom compares the Psalmist's school here with the resort of heathen students to the academy ; and S. Ephraem, referring to this passage, calls the fear of God itself the school of the mind. "As if he proclaimed," says S. Lawrence Justiniani, "I will teach you, not the courses of the stars, not the nature of things, not the secrets of the heavens, but *the fear of the Lord*. The knowledge of such matters, without fear, puffs up ; but *the fear of the Lord, without any such knowledge*, can save." "Here," says Cassiodorus, "is not fear to be feared, but to be loved. Human fear is full of bitterness ; divine fear of sweetness : the one drives to slavery, the other allures to liberty ; the one dreads the prison of Gehenna, the other opens the kingdom of heaven."—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 11.—"*The fear of the Lord.*" Let this, therefore, good children, be your principal care and study : for what shall it avail you to be cunning in Tully, Virgil, Homer, and other profane writers, if you be unskilful in God's book ? to have learned Greek and Latin, if you learn not withal the language of Canaan ? to have your speech agreeable to the rules of Priscian, of Lily, if your lives and courses be not consonant to the rules and laws of Christianity ? to have knowledge of the creatures when you are ignorant of the Creator ? to have learned that whereby you may live a while here, and neglect that whereby you may live eternally hereafter ? Learn to fear God, to serve God, and then God will bless you ; for "He will bless them that fear him, both small and great." Ps. cxv. 13. *Thomas Gataker's* "*David's Instructor*," 1637.

Verse 12.—It is no great matter to live long, or always, but to live happily. That loyal prayer, "Let the king live" (in every language) imports a prosperous state. When the psalmist saith, "Who is the man that would see life ?" he explaineth himself presently after by "good days." *Vivere* among the Latins is sometimes as much as *valere*, to live is as much as to be well ; and upon this account it is that as, on the one hand, the Scripture calls the state of the damned an eternal death, because their life is only a continuance in misery ; so on the other hand the state of the blessed is an eternal life, because it is a perpetual abode in felicity.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 12.—The benefit of life is not in the length, but in the use of it. He sometimes lives the least that lives the longest.—*Seneca.*

Verse 13.—"*Keep thy tongue from evil,*" etc. Ficinus, after his tracts, *De sanitate tuenda, of keeping good health ;* and another, *of recovering* health ; and a third, *of prolonging life ;* because all will not do, wisely addeth a fourth, of *laying hold on eternal life ;* which cannot be done but by mortifying this earthly member, a loose and lewd tongue. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," saith the Judge himself. Matt. xii. 37. Compare Gen. xlix. 21, with Deut. xxxiii. 23, and it will appear that good words ingratiate with God and man.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 13.—"*And thy lips from speaking guile.*" Perhaps David, in warning us that we speak no guile, reflects upon his own sin in changing his behaviour. They that truly repent of what they have done amiss, will warn others to take heed of doing likewise.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 14.—"*Depart from evil,*" etc. This denotes that evil is near to men ; it keeps close to them, and should be declined and shunned : and it regards all sorts of evil ; evil men and their evil company ; evil things, evil words and works, and all appearance of evil ; and the fear of the Lord shows itself in a hatred of it, and a departure from it. Prov. viii. 13 ; xvi. 6.—*John Gill.*

Verse 14.—"*Depart from evil.*" The other precepts are the duty of works, and they are four, where the precepts of words were but two ; because we must be more in works than in words ; and they are all affirmative, for it is against the nature of a work to be in the negative ; for so working should be no better than idleness : the two former are general, as general as good and evil ; that if

we meet with anything that is evil, our part is to *depart*, for there is no demurring upon evil.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 14.—"*Do good.*" Negative goodness is not sufficient to entitle us to heaven. There are some in the world whose religion runs all upon negatives; they are not drunkards, they are not swearers, and for this they do bless themselves. See how the Pharisee vapours (Luke xviii. 11), "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers," etc. Alas! the not being scandalous will no more make a Christian than a cypher will make a sum. We are bid, not only to *cease from evil*, but to *do good.* It will be a poor plea at last—Lord, I kept myself from being spotted with gross sin: I did no hurt. But what good is there in thee? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard that he doth no hurt there, he doth not break the trees, or destroy the hedges; if he doth not work in the vineyard he loseth his pay. It is not enough for us to say at the last day, we have done no hurt, we have lived in no gross sin; but what good have we done in the vineyard? Where is the grace we have gotten? If we cannot show this, we shall lose our pay, and miss of salvation.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 14.—"*Seek peace, and pursue it.*" Yea, do well, and thou shalt not need to pursue it; peace will find thee without seeking. Augustine says, *Fiat justitia, et habebis pacem*—Live righteously, and live peaceably. Quietness shall find out righteousness wheresoever he lodgeth. But she abhorreth the house of evil. Peace will not dine where grace hath not first broken her fast. Let us embrace godliness, and "the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, shall preserve our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ." Phil. iv. 7.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 14.—"*Seek peace and pursue it.*" The most desirable things are not the easiest to be obtained. What is more lovely to the imagination than the tranquillity of peace? But this great blessing does not voluntarily present itself: it must be *sought.* Even when sought it often eludes the grasp: it flies away, and must be *pursued.* 1. The man of a peaceable carriage must be cautious not to give offence when needless, or, when it may innocently be spared. 2. Another part of the peaceable man's character is, not to take offence; especially in small matters, which are hardly worth a wise man's notice. 3. If any needless offence has been either given or taken, we must endeavour to put a stop to it as soon as may be. If a difference is already begun, stifle it in the birth, and suffer it not to proceed farther.—*Condensed from Dr. Waterland's Sermon, in J. R. Pitman's Course of Sermons on the Psalms*, 1846.

Verse 15.—"*His ears are open unto their cry.*" The word "open" is not in the original, but the meaning is that the ear of God is propense, and in a leaning kind of posture, towards the cries of the righteous; the word may here be taken emphatically, as many times in Scripture it is, for some worthy, choice, and excellent strain of righteousness. Those who are worthy and righteous indeed, the ear of God, I say, is propense, and leans and hangs towards them and their prayers, according to that of Cant. ii. 14, "Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice." There is a kind of naturalness and pleasantness between the ear of God and the prayers, and petitions, and cries of such a righteous man. John xv. 7.—*John Goodwin.*

Verse 15.—"*His ears are open unto their cry.*" Hebrew, "*Are to their cry,*" or as St. Peter hath it, "*His ears are into their prayers*" (1 Peter iii. 12); to show that though their prayers are so faint and feeble that they cannot enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, yet that he will bow down and incline his ears *unto*, nay, *into* their prayers, their breathings. Lam. iii. 56.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 15—17.—"*The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*" Strangers may howl, and we take little notice what they ail—it is a venture whether we relieve them or no; but if our children cry, being in great distress, we hasten to their help. Our relation to God may well strengthen our hope that our desires shall be heard. He that can cry,

Abba, Father, may be confident of the success of his suit, and that God will deal with him as a son.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 18.—"*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.*" God is *nigh unto them* (with reverence be it spoken), God takes so much complacency in the company of such, that he cannot endure to have them far from him; he must have them always nigh to him, always under his eyes; as for these "*broken*" ones, he will be sure not to leave them long, nor to go far from them, but will be ready at hand to set their bones, to bind up their wounds to keep them from festering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future aches. He is a foolish cruel chirurgeon, who, for fear of putting his patient to some pain, never searcheth the wound, but skins it over presently; and a wise man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquisite pain, so he make a thorough cure of it. Thus God doth by his patients sometimes, when the nature of their distemper calls for it. But, however, he will be sure not to be out of the way when they want him most. It is possible they may look upon themselves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Physician when he is by them, and they may take their Friend for an enemy; they may think God far off when he is near; but when their eyes are opened and their distemper is pretty well worn off, they will, with shame and thankfulness, acknowledge their error; nay, they do from their souls confess, that they do not deserve the least look of kindness from God, but to be counted strangers and enemies; but God will let them know that he loves to act like himself, that is, like a God of love, mercy, and goodness; and that they are the persons that he hath set his heart upon; he will have them in his bosom, never leave them nor forsake them; and though these contrite ones many times look upon themselves as lost, yet God will save them, and they shall sing a song of thankfulness amongst his delivered ones.—*James Janeway.*

Verse 18.—"*The Lord is nigh unto them,*" etc. Consider the ADVANTAGES of this broken heart; as I. A broken heart is acceptable and wellpleasing to God, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalm li. 17. II. It makes up many defects in your service and duties, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." Psalm li. 17. III. It makes the soul a fit receptacle for God to dwell in, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah lvii. 15. IV. It brings God near to men, "*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*" Psalm xxxiv. 18. And V. It lays you open to Christ's sweet healing, "I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Ezek. xxxiv. 16. And, oh, who would not be broken that they may find Christ's soft hand healing them, and find the proof of that sweet word, "For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord." Jer. xxx. 17. Yea, VI. It puts you in the right road to heaven, where all your wounds and bruises will be cured; for there is a tree (Rev. xxii. 2) the leaves whereof are for the healing of the nations; there is no complaining there of wounds or bruises, but all are perfectly healed.—*John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra, or a Collection of Sermons,"* etc., 1703.

Verse 18.—"*The Lord is nigh unto them,*" etc. We are apt to overlook men, in proportion as they are humbled beneath us; God regards them in that proportion. Vessels of honour are made of that clay which is "*broken*" into the smallest parts.—*George Horne.*

Verse 18.—"*Broken heart . . . . . contrite spirit.*" Oh, this is the misery of all miseries which ministers have most cause to complain of, that men are not fitted enough for Jesus Christ, they are not lost enough in themselves for a Saviour. "In thee the fatherless findeth mercy." Hosea xiv. 3. Were we

more hopeless, helpless, and fatherless, we should find more mercy from the hand of Jesus Christ. O that God would awaken and shake some sin-sleeping soul this day! O that this doctrine thus opened might be as a thunderbolt to let some of you see the inside of yourselves! O poor sinner, thou hast an unsupportable burden of sin and guilt lying on thy soul, ready to press thee down to hell, and yet thou feelest it not; thou hast the wrath of God hanging over thy head by the twined thread of a short life, which it may be thou mayest not be free from one year, nay, perhaps not one month, but thou seest it not; if thou didst but see it, then thou wouldest cry out as he did in Bosworth field, "A horse! a horse! a kingdom for a horse!" So thou wouldest cry out, None but Christ! nothing but Christ! ten thousand worlds for Christ!—*James Nalton*, 1664.

Verse 18.—"*A contrite spirit.*" דַּכְּאֵי־רוּחַ, *dakkeey ruach*, "the beaten-out spirit." In both words the *hammer* is necessarily implied; in breaking to pieces the ore first, and then plating out the metal when it has been separated from the ore. This will call to the reader's remembrance Jer. xxiii. 29, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord: and like a *hammer* that breaketh the *rock* in pieces?" The *breaking to shivers*, and *beating out* are metaphorical expressions: so are the *hammer* and the *rock*. What the large *hammer* struck on a rock by a powerful hand would do, so does the word of the Lord when struck on the sinner's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. The *broken heart*, and the *contrite spirit*, are two essential characteristics of true repentance.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 19.—"*Many are the afflictions of the righteous,*" etc. Be our troubles many in number, strange in nature, heavy in measure; yet God's mercies are more numerous, his wisdom more wondrous, his power more miraculous; he will deliver us out of all.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 19.—"*Many are the afflictions of the righteous,*" etc. When David did behold his trouble, like the host of the Aramites (2 Kings vi. 16), he looked back unto God like Elisha, and spied one with him stronger than all against him. Therefore, respecting his afflictions he crieth, "*Many are the troubles of the righteous;*" respecting the promise he sayeth, "*The Lord delivereth him out of all.*" Thus, by his own foot, David measureth the condition of the righteous, and saith, "*Many are the troubles of the righteous;*" and then, by his own cure, he showeth how they should be healed, saying, "*The Lord will deliver him out of them all.*" . . . The lawyer can deliver his client but from strife, the physician can deliver his patient but from sickness, the master can deliver his servant but from bondage, but the Lord delivereth us from *all*. As when Moses came to deliver the Israelites, he would not leave a hoof behind him, so when the Lord cometh to deliver the righteous he will not leave a trouble behind him. He who saith, "I put away all thine iniquities," will also say, "I put away all thine infirmities."—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 20.—"*He keepeth all his bones,*" which were very many. Perhaps (saith Abenezra here), David had been scourged by the Philistines, but his bones were not broken, nor were our Saviour's. John xix. 36.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 20.—"*All his bones.*" Muis observes, "It says not his *body*, for this he permits to be afflicted; but it signifies that the evils of the godly are light, and scarcely penetrate to the bone;" but Geier observes, "This is too subtle, rather the bone reminds us of the essential parts of the body, by whose injury the whole frame is endangered. It is a proverbial form of speech like that in Matt. x. 30, 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered,' expressing the remarkable defence afforded to the righteous." Genebrard says, "The bones are put by synecdoche for all the members."—*From Poli Synopsis.*

Verse 20.—The passover lamb, of which not a bone was broken, prefigured Jesus as one, "not a bone of whose body should be broken;" and yet, at the same time, it prefigured the complete keeping and safety of Christ's body, the

church; as it is written, "*He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.*" *Andrew A. Bonar's Commentary on Leviticus.*

Verse 20.—Christ's bones were in themselves breakable, but could not actually be broken by all the violence in the world, because God had foredecreed, *a bone of him shall not be broken.* So we confess God's children mortal; but all the power of devil or man may not, must not, cannot, kill them before their conversion, according to God's election of them to life, which must be fully accomplished.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 20.—Observe as a point of resemblance between this and the following Psalm, the mention of the bones here and in Psalm xxxv. 10.—*C. Wordsworth.*

Verse 21.—"*Evil.*" Afflictions though in the plural, prove not ruinous to the righteous, for the Lord delivers him out of them all, whereas *evil* in *the singular* slays the wicked, to signify the difference of God's economy towards righteous and wicked men. The former is permitted to fall into many pressures, the latter is not so frequently exercised with them, yet the many that befall the one do no hurt, but work good for him, whereas the fewer that befall the wicked, or perhaps the *one singular affliction* of his life is the utter ruin of him.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 21:—

> Conscience' self the culprit tortures, gnawing him with pangs unknown;
> For that now amendment's season is for ever past and gone,
> And that late repentance findeth pardon none for all her moan.
>
> *S. Peter Damiano*, 988—1072.

Verse 21.—"*Shall be desolate.*" In the margin it is, *shall be guilty.* And this is the proper meaning of the original word, אָשְׁמוּ. They are guilty, and liable to punishment. Thus the word is frequently rendered in our version (see Levit. iv. 13, 22); and generally includes it in the idea of guilt, and the punishment incurred by it.—*Samuel Chandler, D.D.*

Verse 22.—The promises of God to his church, and his threatenings of sin recorded in the living book of his word, are not antiquate; no age shall ever superannuate them, or put them out of full force and virtue. What if good persons and good causes do suffer oppression? The poet is a divine in that case—

> *Informes hiemes reducit*
> *Jupiter; idem*
> *Summovet. Non si male nunc, et olim*
> *Sic erit.*

After foul weather comes fair; though it be ill with us now, it will not be always. What if enemies of religion and moths of commonwealth do flourish and prosper, and have all things at will, let it not trouble David and Job; both of them saw as fair a sunshine shut up in a dark cloud, and a world of foul weather following.—*Edward Marbury.*

Verse 22.—Satan cannot tempt longer than God shall give him leave; and he will never suffer thee to be tempted above measure, but will give a good issue unto the temptation. Thou art called to fight under the banner of Christ Jesus, and in the name of the Lord thou shalt be enabled to do valiantly and overcome. If Satan continue his assaults, "God's grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. xii. 9. If thy strength be clean gone, God's power shall be magnified the more in thee, and he hath brought thee low that thou mayest not trust in thyself, but in the living Lord, and that the whole praise of the victory might be ascribed unto him. If thy strength did remain, it was not to be leaned unto; and now it is decayed and gone, there is no cause of fear, for the Lord will be thy stay. In the most difficult assaults and tedious encounters, we are exhorted to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Be of good courage, and God will grant thee an easy, a joyful victory. Satan's drift in tempting is to turmoil, dishearten, and perplex with fears, and drive into

despair ; and if thou take heart to rest quietly upon God's grace, and fly unto his name, thou shalt put him to flight, thou hast already got the day. Wait but awhile, and these dark mists and terrible storms shall be dispersed. By these temptations the Lord hath taught thee to see by weakness, and the malice of Satan ; to deny thine own wisdom and prize his favour, lightly to esteem all things here below, and highly to value mercy reaching to the pardon of sin, and heavenly communion and fellowship with God. And if this bitter potion hath wrought so kindly for thy spiritual good, why shouldst thou be dismayed ? Trust in the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thee. "*The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants : and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*"—*John Ball.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Firm resolution, serious difficulties in carrying it out, helps for its performance, excellent consequences of so doing.

Six questions.—*Who?* "I." *What?* "Will bless." *Whom?* "The Lord." *When?* "At all times." *How? Why?*

Verse 1.—Direction for making a heaven below.

Verse 2.—The commendable boaster and his gratified audience.

We may boast of the Lord, in himself, his manifestations of himself, his relationship to us, our interest in him, our expectations from him, etc.

The duty of believers to relate their experience for the benefit of others.

Verse 3.—Invitation to united praise.

Verse 3.—*Magnifying*—or making great the work of God, a noble exercise.

Verse 4.—*Confessions of a ransomed soul.* Simple, honouring to God, exclude merit, and encourage others to seek also.

Verse 4.—*Four stages*, "fears," "sought," "heard," "delivered."

Verse 5.—The power of a faith-look.

Verse 6.—I. The poor man's heritage, "troubles." II. The poor man's friend. III. The poor man's cry. IV. The poor man's salvation.

Verse 6.—The poor man's wealth.

The position of prayer in the economy of grace, or the natural history of mercy in the soul.

Verse 7.—*Castra angelorum, salvatio bonorum.*

Verse 7.—The ministry of angels.

In what sense Jesus is "The angel of the Lord."

Verse 8.—Experience the only true test of religious truth.

Verse 8.—*Taste.* The sanctified palate, the *recherché* provision, the gratified verdict, the celestial host.

Verse 9.—The blest estate of a God-fearing man.

Verse 9.—Fear expelling fear. *Similia similibus curantur.*

Verse 10.—Lions lacking, but the children satisfied. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 65. I. Description of a true Christian, "seek the Lord." II. The promise set forth by a contrast. III. The promise fulfilled.

Verse 10.—What is a good thing ?

Verse 11.—A royal teacher, his youthful disciples, his mode of instruction, "Come ;" his choice subject.

Verse 11.—Sunday-school work.

Verses 12, 13, 14.—How to make the best of both worlds.

Verse 13.—Sins of the tongue—their mischief, their cause, and their cure.

Verse 14 (*first clause*).—The relation between the negative and positive virtues.

Verse 14 (*second clause*).—*The royal hunt.* The game, the difficulties of the chase, the hunters, their methods, and their rewards.

Verse 15.—Our observant God. Eyes and ears both set on us.

Verse 16.—The evil man checkmated in life, and forgotten in death.

Verse 17.—*Afflictions and their threefold blessing.* I. They make us pray. II. They bring us the Lord's hearing ear. III. They afford room for joyful experience of deliverance.

Verse 18.—The nearness of God to broken hearts, and the certainty of their salvation.

Verse 19.—Black and white, or bane and antidote.

Special people, special trials, special deliverances, special faith as a duty.

Verse 20.—The real safety of a believer when in great perils. His soul, his spiritual life, his faith, hope, love, etc. ; his interest in Jesus, his adoption, justification, these all kept.

Verse 21.—Wickedness, its own executioner, illustrated by scriptural cases, by history, by the lost in hell. Lessons from the solemn fact.

The forlorn condition of a man of malicious spirit.

Verses 21, 22.—Who shall and who shall not be desolate.

Verse 22.—*Redemption* in its various meanings ; *faith* in its universal preservation ; *the Lord* in his unrivalled glory in the work of grace.

WORK UPON THE THIRTY-FOURTH PSALM.

Meditations upon the XXXIV. Psalme, in Sir Richard Baker's Works.

PSALM XXXV.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David.—*Here is all we know concerning this Psalm, but internal evidence seems to fix the date of its composition in those troublous times when Saul hunted David over hill and dale, and when those who fawned upon the cruel king, slandered the innocent object of his wrath, or it may be referred to the unquiet days of frequent insurrections in David's old age. The whole Psalm is the appeal to heaven of a bold heart and a clear conscience, irritated beyond measure by oppression and malice. Beyond a doubt David's Lord may be seen here by the spiritual eye.*

DIVISIONS.—*The most natural mode of dividing this Psalm is to note its triple character. Its complaint, prayer, and promise of praise are repeated with remarkable parallelism three times, even as our Lord in the Garden prayed three times, using the same words. The first portion occupies from verse* 1 *to* 10, *the second from* 11 *to* 18, *and the last from* 19 *to the close; each section ending with a note of grateful song.*

EXPOSITION.

PLEAD *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

2 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

3 Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.

4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery; and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

7 For without cause have they hid for me their net *in* a pit, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, LORD, who *is* like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

1. "*Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me.*" Plead against those who plead against me; strive with my strivers; contend with my contenders. If they urge their suit in the law-court, Lord, meet them there, and beat them at their own weapons. Every saint of God shall have this privilege: the accuser of the brethren shall be met by the Advocate of the saints. "*Fight against them that fight against me.*" If my advisers try force as well as fraud, be a match for them; oppose thy strength to their strength. Jesus does this for all his beloved—for them he is both intercessor and champion; whatever aid they need they shall receive from him, and in whatever manner

they are assaulted they shall be effectually defended. Let us not fail to leave our case into the Lord's hand. Vain is the help of man, but ever effectual is the interposition of heaven. What is here asked for as a boon, may be regarded as a promise to all the saints; in judgment they shall have a divine advocate, in warfare a divine protection.

2. "*Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.*" In vivid metaphor the Lord is pictured as coming forth armed for battle, and interposing himself between his servant and his enemies. The greater and lesser protections of providence may be here intended by the two defensive weapons, and by the Lord's standing up is meant his active and zealous preservation of his servant in the perilous hour. This poetic imagery shows how the psalmist realised the existence and power of God; and thought of him as a real and acutal personage, truly working for his afflicted.

3. "*Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me.*" Before the enemy comes to close quarters the Lord can push them off as with a long spear. To stave off trouble is no mean act of lovingkindness. As when some valiant warrior with his lance blocks up a defile, and keeps back a host until his weaker brethren have made good their escape, so does the Lord often hold the believer's foes at bay until the good man has taken breath, or clean fled from his foes. He often gives the foes of Zion some other work to do, and so gives rest to his church. What a glorious idea is this of Jehovah blocking the way of persecutors, holding them at the pike's end, and giving time for the hunted saint to elude their pursuit! "*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" Besides holding off the enemy, the Lord can also calm the mind of his servant by express assurance from his own mouth, that he is, and shall be, safe under the Almighty wing. An inward persuasion of security in God is of all things the most precious in the furnace of persecution. One word from the Lord quiets all our fears.

4. "*Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul.*" There is nothing malicious here, the slandered man simply craves for justice, and the petition is natural and justifiable. Guided by God's good spirit the psalmist foretells the everlasting confusion of all the haters of the righteous. Shameful disappointment shall be the portion of the enemies of the gospel, nor would the most tender-hearted Christian have it otherwise: viewing sinners as men, we love them and seek their good, but regarding them as enemies of God, we cannot think of them with anything but detestation, and a loyal desire for the confusion of their devices. No loyal subject can wish well to rebels. Squeamish sentimentality may object to the strong language here used, but in their hearts all good men wish confusion to mischief-makers.

5. "*Let them be as chaff before the wind.*" They were swift enough to attack, let them be as swift to flee. Let their own fears and the alarms of their consciences unman them so that the least breeze of trouble shall carry them hither and thither. Ungodly men are worthless in character, and light in their behaviour, being destitute of solidity and fixedness; it is but just that those who make themselves chaff should be treated as such. When this imprecation is fulfilled in graceless men, they will find it an awful thing to be for ever without rest, without peace of mind, or stay of soul, hurried from fear to fear, and from misery to misery. "*And let the angel of the Lord chase them.*" Fallen angels shall haunt them, good angels shall afflict them. To be pursued by avenging spirits will be the lot of those who delight in persecution. Observe the whole scene as the psalmist sketches it: the furious foe is first held at bay, then turned back, then driven to headlong flight, and chased by fiery messengers from whom there is no escape, while his pathway becomes dark and dangerous, and his destruction overwhelming.

6. "*Let their way be dark and slippery.*" What terrors are gathered here! No light, no foothold, and a fierce avenger at their heels! What a doom is appointed for the enemies of God! They may rage and rave to-day, but how altered will be their plight ere long! "*And let the angel of the Lord persecute*

them." He will follow them hot-foot, as we say, never turning aside, but like a trusty pursuivant serving the writ of vengeance upon them, and arresting them in the name of unflinching justice. Woe, woe, woe, unto those who touch the people of God; their destruction is both swift and sure.

7. In this verse the psalmist brings forward the gravamen of his charge against the servants of the devil. "*For without cause*"—without my having injured, assailed, or provoked them; out of their own spontaneous malice "*have they hid for me their net in a pit,*" even as men hunt for their game with cunning and deception. Innocent persons have often been ruined by traps set for them, into which they have fallen as guilelessly as beasts which stumble into concealed pits, and are taken as in a net. It is no little thing to be able to feel that the enmity which assails us is undeserved—uncaused by any wilful offence on our part. Twice does David assert in one verse that his adversaries plotted against him "*without cause.*" Net-making and pit-digging require time and labour, and both of these the wicked will expend cheerfully if they may but overthrow the people of God. Fair warfare belongs to honourable men, but the assailants of God's church prefer mean, ungenerous schemes, and so prove their nature and their origin. We must all of us be on our guard, for gins and pitfalls are still the favourite weapons of the powers of evil.

8. "*Let destruction come upon him at unawares.*" This tremendous imprecation is frequently fulfilled. God's judgments are often sudden and signal. Death enters the persecutor's house without pausing to knock at the door. The thunderbolt of judgment leaps from its hiding-place, and in one crash the wicked are broken for ever. "*And let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.*" There is a *lex talionis* with God which often works most wonderfully. Men set traps and catch their own fingers. They throw up stones, and they fall upon their own heads. How often Satan outwits himself, and burns his fingers with his own coals! This will doubtless be one of the aggravations of hell, that men will torment themselves with what were once the fond devices of their rebellious minds. They curse and are cursed; they kick the pricks and tear themselves; they pour forth floods of fire, and it burns them within and without.

9. "*And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord.*" Thus rescued, David ascribes all the honour to the Judge of the right; to his own valorous arm he offers no sacrifice of boasting. He turns away from his adversaries to his God, and finds a deep unbroken joy in Jehovah, and in that joy his spirit revels. "*It shall rejoice in his salvation.*" We do not triumph in the destruction of others, but in the salvation given to us of God. Prayer heard should always suggest praise. It were well if we were more demonstrative in our holy rejoicings. We rob God by suppressing grateful emotions.

10. As if the tongue were not enough to bless God with, David makes every limb vocal—"*All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?*" His whole anatomy he would make resonant with gratitude. Those bones which were to have been broken by my enemies shall now praise God; every one of them shall bring its tribute, ascribing unrivalled excellence to Jehovah the Saviour of his people. Even if worn to skin and bone, yet my very skeleton shall magnify the Lord, "*which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him.*" God is the champion, the true knight-errant of all oppressed ones. Where there is so much condescension, justice, kindness, power, and compassion, the loftiest songs should be rendered. Come, dear reader, have you not been delivered from sin, Satan, and death, and will not you bless the Redeemer? You were poor and weak, but in due time Christ sought you, and set you free. O magnify the Lord to-day, and speak well of his name.

11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good *to* the spoiling of my soul.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth : I humbled my soul with fasting ; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14 I behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend *or* brother : I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth *for his* mother.

15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together : *yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not ; they did tear *me*, and ceased not :

16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17 Lord, how long wilt thou look on ? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation : I will praise thee among much people.

11. "*False witnesses did rise up.*" This is the old device of the ungodly, and we must not wonder if it be used against us as against our Master. To please Saul, there were always men to be found mean enough to impeach David. "*They laid to my charge things that I knew not.*" He had not even a thought of sedition ; he was loyal even to excess ; yet they accused him of conspiring against the Lord's anointed. He was not only innocent, but ignorant of the fault alleged. It is well when our hands are so clean that no trace of dirt is upon them.

12. "*They rewarded me evil for good.*" This is devilish ; but men have learned the lesson well of the old Destroyer, and practise it most perfectly. "*To the spoiling of my soul.*" They robbed him of comfort, and even would have taken his life had it not been for special rescues from the hand of God. The wicked would strip the righteous naked to their very soul : they know no pity. There are only such limits to human malice as God himself may see fit to place.

13. "*But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth.*" David had been a man of sympathy ; he had mourned when Saul was in ill health, putting on the weeds of sorrow for him as though he were a near and dear friend. His heart went into mourning for his sick master. "*I humbled my soul with fasting.*" He prayed for his enemy, and made the sick man's case his own, pleading and confessing as if his own personal sin had brought on the evil. This showed a noble spirit in David, and greatly aggravated the baseness of those who now so cruelly persecuted him. "*And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*" Prayer is never lost : if it bless not those for whom intercession is made, it shall bless the intercessors. Clouds do not always descend in showers upon the same spot from which the vapours ascended, but they come down somewhere ; and even so do supplications in some place or other yield their showers of mercy. If our dove find no rest for the sole of her foot among our enemies, it shall fly into our bosoms and bring an olive branch of peace in its mouth. How sharp is the contrast all through this Psalm between the righteous and his enemies ! We must be earnest to keep the line of demarcation broad and clear.

14. "*I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother :*" I waited on him assiduously, comforted him affectionately, and sympathised with him deeply. This may refer to those days when David played on the harp, and chased away the evil spirit from Saul. "*I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*" He bowed his head as mourners do. The strongest natural grief was such as he felt when they were in trouble. The mother usually wins the deepest love, and her loss is most keenly felt : such was David's grief. How few professors in these days have such bowels of compassion ; and yet under

the gospel there should be far more tender love than under the law. Had we more hearty love to manhood, and care for its innumerable ills, we might be far more useful; certainly we should be infinitely more Christ-like. "He prayeth best that loveth best."

15. "*But in mine adversity they rejoiced.*" In my halting they were delighted. My lameness was sport to them. Danger was near, and they sang songs over my expected defeat. How glad are the wicked to see a good man limp! "Now," say they, "he will meet with his downfall." "*And gathered themselves together*," like kites and vultures around a dying sheep. They found a common joy in my ruin, and a recreation in my sorrow, and therefore met together to keep the feast. They laid their heads together to devise, and their tongues to deceive. "*Yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me.*" Those who deserved horsewhipping, fellows the soles of whose feet were needing the bastinado, came together to plot, and held hole-and-corner meetings. Like curs around a sick lion, the mean wretches taunted and insulted one whose name had been their terror. The very cripples hobbled out to join the malicious crew. How unanimous are the powers of evil; how heartily do men serve the devil; and none decline his service because they are not endowed with great abilities! "*I knew it not.*" It was all done behind my back. What a fluster the world may be in, and the cause of it all may not even know that he has given offence. "*They did tear me, and ceased not.*" It is such dainty work to tear to pieces a good man's character, that when slanderers have their hand in they are loath to leave off. A pack of dogs tearing their prey is nothing compared with a set of malicious gossips mauling the reputation of a worthy man. That lovers of the gospel are not at this time rent and torn as in the old days of Mary, is to be attributed to the providence of God rather than to the gentleness of men.

16. "*With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.*" Like professional buffoons who grin around the banquet to make sport, so they made a business of jeering at the good man; not, however, out of mirth, but from violent, insatiable hatred. Like cake-scoffers, or men who will jeer for a bit of bread, these hireling miscreants persecuted David in order to get a bellyfull for themselves from Saul's table: having moreover an inward grudge against the son of Jesse because he was a better man than themselves.

Very forcibly might our Lord have used the words of these verses! Let us not forget to see the Despised and Rejected of men here painted to the life. Calvary and the ribald crew around the cross seem brought before our eyes.

17. "*Lord, how long wilt thou look on?*" Why be a mere spectator? Why so neglectful of thy servant? Art thou indifferent? Carest thou not that we perish? We may thus reason with the Lord. He permits us this familiarity. There is a time for our salvation, but to our impatience it often seems to be very slow in coming; yet wisdom has ordained the hour, and nothing shall delay it. "*Rescue my soul from their destructions.*" From their many devices; their multiplied assaults, be pleased to set me free. "*My darling*," my lovely, only, precious soul, do thou rescue "*from the lions.*" His enemies were fierce, cunning, and strong as young lions; God only could deliver him from their jaws, to God he therefore addresses himself.

18. "*I will give thee thanks in the great congregation.*" Notable deliverances must be recorded, and their fame emblazoned. All the saints should be informed of the Lord's goodness. The theme is worthy of the largest assembly, the experience of a believer is a subject fit for an assembled universe to hear of. Most men publish their griefs, good men should proclaim their mercies. "*I will praise thee among much people.*" Among friends and foes will I glorify the God of my salvation. Praise—personal praise, public praise, perpetual praise—should be the daily revenue of the King of heaven. Thus, for the second time, David's prayer ends in praise, as indeed all prayer should.

19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over

me : *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20 For they speak not peace : but they devise deceitful matters against *them that are* quiet in the land.

21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

22 *This* thou hast seen, O LORD : keep not silence : O LORD, be not far from me.

23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

24 Judge me, O LORD, my God, according to thy righteousness ; and let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it : let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt : let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify *themselves* against me.

27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause : yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long.

19. He earnestly prays that as they have no cause for their enmity, they may have no cause for triumph either in his folly, sin, or overthrow. "*Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*" The winking of the eye was the low-bred sign of congratulation at the ruin of their victim, and it may also have been one of their scornful gestures as they gazed upon him whom they despised. To cause hatred is the mark of the wicked, to suffer it causelessly is the lot of the righteous. God is the natural Protector of all who are wronged, and he is the enemy of all oppressors.

20. "*For they speak not peace.*" They love it not ; how can they speak it ? They are such troublers themselves that they cannot judge others to be peaceable. Out of the mouth comes what is in the heart. Riotous men charge others with sedition. "*They devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.*" David would fain have been an orderly citizen, but they laboured to make him a rebel. He could do nothing aright, all his dealings were misrepresented. This is an old trick of the enemy to brand good men with S.S. on their checks, as sowers of sedition, though they have ever been a harmless race, like sheep among wolves. When mischief is meant, mischief is soon made. Unscrupulous partisans could even charge Jesus with seeking to overturn Cæsar, much more will they thus accuse his household. At this very hour, those who stand up for the crown rights of King Jesus are called enemies of the church, favourers of Popery, friends of Atheists, levellers, red republicans, and it were hard to say what besides. Billingsgate and Babylon are in league.

21. "*Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me.*" As if they would swallow him. Uttering great lies which needed wide mouths. They set no bounds to their infamous charges, but poured out wholesale abuse, trusting that if all did not stick, some of it would. "*And said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.*" Glad to find out a fault or a misfortune, or to swear they had seen evil where there was none. Malice has but one eye ; it is blind to all virtue in its enemy. Eyes can generally see what hearts wish. A man with a mote in his eye sees a spot in the sun. How like a man is to an ass when he brays over another's misfortunes ! how like to a devil when he laughs a hyæna-laugh over a good

man's slip! Malice is folly, and when it holds a festival its tones and gestures far exceed all the freaks and mummeries of the lord of misrule.

22. "*This thou hast seen, O Lord.*" Here is comfort. Our heavenly Father knows all our sorrow. Omniscience is the saint's candle which never goes out. A father will not long endure to see his child abused. Shall not God avenge his own elect? "*Keep not silence.*" Rebuke thine enemies and mine, O Lord. A word will do it. Clear my character, comfort my heart. "*O Lord, be not far from me.*" Walk the furnace with me. Stand in the pillory at my side. The sweet presence of God is the divine cordial of the persecuted; his painful absence would be their deepest misery.

23. "*Stir up thyself.*" Be upon thy mettle. Prove that thou art no indifferent witness to all this infamy. "*Awake to my judgment.*" Take the sceptre and summon the great assize; vindicate justice, avenge oppression. Do not tarry as men do who sleep. "*Even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.*" He claims a nearness to his God, he holds him with both hands; he leaves his case with the righteous Judge. He begs that the suit may be brought on, heard, tried, and verdict given. Well is it for a man when his conscience is so clear that he dares to make such an appeal.

24. The appeal is here repeated; the plaintiff feels that the joy of his accusers will be shortlived as soon as impartial justice rules. The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely, the fool's grimace—all, all will cease when the righteous Lord sits down upon the judgment seat.

25. "*Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*" Disappoint them of their prey when their mouths are ready to swallow it. Saints are too dear a morsel for the powers of evil; God will not give his sheep over to the wolfish jaws of persecutors. Just when they are tuning their pipes to celebrate their victory, they shall be made to laugh on the other side of their mouths. They are all too sure, and too boastful; they reckon without their host: little do they dream of the end which will be put to their scheming. Their bird shall be flown, and they themselves shall be in the trap. The prayer of this text is a promise. Even before the lips of the wicked can frame a speech of exultation, they shall be disappointed; their heart-speech shall be forestalled, their wishes frustrated, their knavish tricks exposed.

26. Here is the eternal result of all the laborious and crafty devices of the Lord's enemies. God will make little of them, though they "*magnified themselves;*" he will shame them for shaming his people, bring them to confusion for making confusion, pull off their fine apparel and give them a beggarly suit of dishonour, and turn all their rejoicing into weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Truly, the saints can afford to wait.

27. "*Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause.*" Even those who could not render him active aid, but in their hearts favoured him, David would have the Lord reward most abundantly. Men of tender heart set great store by the good wishes and prayers of the Lord's people. Jesus also prizes those whose hearts are with his cause. The day is coming when shouts of victory shall be raised by all who are on Christ's side, for the battle will turn, and the foes of truth shall be routed. "*Yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified.*" He would have their gladness contributory to the divine glory; they are not to shout to David's praise, but for the honour of Jehovah. Such acclamations may fitly be continued throughout time and eternity. "*Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*" They recognised David as the Lord's servant, and saw with pleasure the Lord's favour to him. We can have no nobler title than "servant of God," and no greater reward than for our Master to delight in our prosperity. What true prosperity may be we are not always best able to judge. We must leave that in Jesus' hand; he will not fail to rule all things for our highest good.

"For by his saints it stands confessed,
That what he does is always best."

28. Unceasing praise is here vowed to the just and gracious God. From morning till evening the grateful tongue would talk and sing, and glorify the Lord. O for such a resolve carried out by us all!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Bonar entitles this Psalm, "*The awful utterance of the Righteous One regarding those that hate him without cause;*" and he makes the following remarks thereupon:—"Throughout the endless day of eternity the Lord Jesus shall himself speak the Father's 'praise,' and shall put marked emphasis on his '*righteousness*'—that righteousness which shall have been exhibited, both in the doom of those who hated the offered Redeemer, and in the salvation of those who received him. There is nothing in all this wherein his own may not fully join, especially on that day when their views of justice shall be far clearer and fuller than now. On that day we shall be able to understand how Samuel could hew Agag in pieces, and the godly hosts of Israel slay utterly in Canaan man and woman and child, at God's command. We shall be able, not only fully to agree in the doom, 'Let them be confounded,' etc., but even to sing, 'Amen, Hallelujah,' over the smoke of torment. Rev. xix. 1, 2. We should in some measure now be able to use every verse of this Psalm in the spirit in which *the Judge* speaks it, we feeling ourselves his assessors in judging the world. 1 Cor. vi. 2. We shall, at all events, be able to use it on that day when what is written here shall be all accomplished."—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"*Plead my cause, O God, with them that strive with me.*" 1. Doth the world condemn thee for thy zeal in the service of God? Reproachfully scorn thee for thy care to maintain good works? not blush to traduce thee with imputations of preciseness, conceited singularity, pharisaical hypocrisy? Oh, but if thy conscience condemn thee not all this while, if that be rectified by the sacred word of God, if thou aim at his glory in pursuing thine own salvation, and side not with the disturbers of the church, go on, good Christian, in the practice of piety, discourage not thyself in thy laudable endeavours, but recount with comfort that the Lord is thy judge (1 Cor. iv. 4), with a *scio cui crediderim*, "I know whom I have believed." 2 Tim. i. 12. 2. Art thou wrongfully adjudged in the erroneous courts of men? are truth and righteousness gone aside from their proper places? Is equity neglected, and poverty overlaid? Well, have patience awhile, cheer up thy fainting spirits, there is a God that beholdeth the innocency of thy cause, unto whom thou hast liberty to make thy last appeal: "*Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.*" Or, 3. Art thou otherwise injured by the hands of malicious men? and doth a penurious estate disable thee to sue for amends? Doth a *Nimrod* oppress thee? A *Laban* defraud thee? A covetous landlord gripe thee? Well, yet take not the matter into thine own hands by attempting unlawful courses; presume not to be judge in thine own cause, for default of a present redress; but often remember what the apostle taught his Thessalonians: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you."—*Isaac Craven's Sermon at Paul's Cross*, 1630.

Verse 1.—"*Plead,*" etc. More literally, *litigate, O Lord, with them* that litigate against me, contend against them that contend with me; *i.e.*, avenge me of mine adversaries.—*Daniel Cresswell, D.D., F.R.S., in "The Psalms of David according to the Book of Common Prayer: with Critical and Explanatory Notes,"* 1843.

Verse 2.—"*Shield and buckler.*" The word rendered "*shield*" is in the Hebrew text מָגֵן, *magen*, which was a short buckler intended merely for defence. The word rendered "*buckler*" is צִנָּה *tsinnah;* it was double the weight of the magen, and was carried by the infantry; the magen, being lighter and more manageable, was used by the cavalry. The *tsinnah* answered to the *scutum*, and the magen to the *clypeus*, among the Romans. The word *tsinnah*, means that kind of shield from the middle of which there arose a large boss, surmounted by a dagger, and which was highly useful both as a defensive and an offensive weapon in ancient warfare.—*James Anderson, note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 3.—"*Draw out the spear, and stop the way.*" The spear in the days of Saul and David was a favourite weapon. (See 1 Chron. xi.) A valiant man bravely defending a narrow pass might singly with his lance keep back a pursuing host, and give time for his friends to escape. Very remarkable were the feats of valour of this sort performed in Oriental warfare. David would have his God become his heroic defender, making his enemies pause.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 3.—"*Draw out;*" or, as the Hebrew phrase is, *empty*, that is, *unsheath;* the like is of the *sword.* Exod. xv. 9; Levit. xxvi. 33.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 3.—"*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" Observe, 1. That salvation may be made sure to a man. David would never pray for that which could not be. Nor would Peter charge us with a duty which stood not in possibility to be performed. 2 Peter i. 10. "Make your election sure." And to stop the bawling throats of all cavilling adversaries, Paul directly proves it: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. We may then know that Christ is in us. If Christ be in us, we are in Christ; if we be in Christ, we cannot be condemned, for (Rom. viii. 1), "There is no damnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But I leave this point that it may be sure, as granted; and come to ourselves, that we may make it sure. The Papists deny this, and teach the contrary, that salvation cannot be made sure; much good do it them, with their sorry and heartless doctrine! If they make that impossible to any which God hath made easy for many, "into their secret let not my soul come." Gen. xlix. 6. Observe, 2. That the best saints have desired to make their salvation sure. David that knew it, yet entreats to know it more. "I know thou favourest me" (Psalm xli. 11); yet here still, *dic animæ*, "*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" A man can never be too sure of his going to heaven.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 3.—"*Say unto my soul.*" God may speak with *his own voice;* and thus he gave assurance to Abraham, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Gen. xv. 1. If God speak comfort, let hell roar horror. 2. He may speak by *his works:* actual mercies to us demonstrate that we are in his favour, and shall not be condemned. "By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me." 3. He may speak by *his Son.* "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28. 4. He may speak by *his Scripture;* this is God's epistle to us, and his letters patent, wherein are granted to us all the privileges of salvation. A universal *si quis;* "Whosoever believes, and is baptised, shall be saved." 5. He may speak by *his ministers*, to whom he hath given "the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor. v. 19. 6. He doth speak this by *his Spirit:* he "sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. iv. 6. By all these voices God says to his elect, "*I am your salvation.*" . . . . . "*My.*" There is no vexation to the vexation of the soul; so no consolation to the consolation of the soul. . . . . Let this teach us to make much of this "*My.*" Luther says there is great divinity in pronouns. The assurance that God will save some is a faith incident to devils. The very reprobates may believe that there is a book of election: but God never told them that their names were written there. The hungry beggar at the feast-house gate smells good cheer, but the master doth not say, "This is provided for thee." It is small

comfort to the harbourless wretch to pass through a goodly city, and see many glorious buildings, when he cannot say, *Hæc mea domus*, I have a place here. The beauty of that excellent city Jerusalem, built with sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, and such precious stones, the foundation and walls whereof are perfect gold (Rev. xxi.), affords a soul no comfort, unless he can say, *Mea civitas*, I have a mansion in it. The all-sufficient merits of Christ do thee no good, unless, *tua pars et portio*, he be thy Saviour. Happy soul that can say with the psalmist, "O Lord, thou art my portion!" Let us all have oil in our lamps, lest if we be then to buy, beg, or borrow, we be shut out of doors like the fools, not worthy of entrance. Pray, "*Lord, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" . . . . . Who? What? To whom? When? WHO? *The Lord!* To the Lord David prays. He hath made a good choice, for there is salvation in none other. "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." Hosea xiii. 9. The world fails, the flesh fails, the devil kills. Only the Lord saves. WHAT? Salvation. A special good thing; every man's desire. I will give thee a lordship, saith God to Esau. I will give thee a kingdom, saith God to Saul. I will give thee an apostleship, saith God to Judas. But, I will be thy salvation, he says to David, and to none but saints. To WHOM? "*My salvation.*" Not others only, but "*thine.*" A man and a Christian are two creatures. He may be a man that hath reason and outward blessings; he is only a Christian that hath faith, and part in the salvation of Christ. God is plentiful salvation, but it is not ordinary to find a *cui*—to whom. Much of heaven is lost for lack of a hand to apprehend it. WHEN? In the present, "*I am.*" *Sum, non sufficit quod ero.* It is comfort to Israel in captivity that God says, *Ero tua redemptio*, I will redeem thee; but the assurance that quiets the conscience is this, "*I am thy salvation.*" As God said to Abraham, "Fear not, I am with thee." Deferred hope faints the heart. Whatsoever God forbears to assure us of, oh, pray we him not to delay this, "Lord, say to our souls, *I am your salvation.*"—*Condensed from Thomas Adams.*

Verse 4.—"*Let them be confounded and put to shame.*" Here David beginneth his imprecations, which yet, saith Theodoret, he doth not utter as cursing, but as prophesying rather. If we shall at any time take upon us thus to imprecate (as we may in some cases), we must see to it, first, that our cause be good; secondly, that we do it not out of private revenge, but merely for the glory of God; thirdly, that we utter not a syllable this way, but by the guidance of God's good Spirit.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 4—8, 26.—How are we to account for such prayers for vengeance? We find them chiefly in four Psalms, the seventh, thirty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one-hundred and ninth, and the imprecations in these form a terrible climax. In the last no less than thirty anathemas have been counted. Are these the mere outbursts of passionate and unsanctified feeling, or are they the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Are they to be excused as being animated by the "spirit of Elias"? a spirit not unholy indeed, but far removed from the meekness and gentleness of Christ; or are they the stereotyped forms in which the spirit of devotion may utter itself? Are they Jewish only, or may they be Christian also? An uninstructed fastidiousness, it is well known, has made many persons recoil from reading these Psalms at all. Many have found their lips falter when they have been called to join in using them in the congregation, and have either uttered them with bated breath and doubting heart, or have interpreted them in a sense widely at variance with the letter. Some have tried to reconcile them with a more enlightened conscience, by regarding such words not as the expression of a wish, but as the utterance of a prediction; but the Hebrew optative which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient. Others again would see in them expressions which may lawfully be used in the soul's wrestling against spiritual enemies. And finally, some would defend them as utterances of righteous zeal for God's honour, and remind us that if we do not sympathise

with such zeal, it may be not because our religion is more pure, but because our hearts are colder.

Now the real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the new. The spirit of Elias, though not an evil spirit, was not the spirit of Christ. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke ix. 56. And through him his disciples are made partakers of the same spirit. But this was not the spirit of the older economy. The Jewish nation had been trained in a sterner school. It had been steeled and hardened by the discipline which had pledged it to a war of extermination with idolaters; and however necessary such a discipline might be, it would not tend to foster the gentler virtues; it is conceivable how even a righteous man, under it, feeling it to be his bounden duty to root out evil wherever he saw it, and identifying, as he did, his own enemies with the enemies of Jehovah, might use language which to us appears unnecessarily vindictive. To men so trained and taught, what we call "religious toleration," was a thing not only wrong, but absolutely inconceivable.

It may be quite true that we find revenge forbidden as directly in the Old Testament as in the New, as, for instance, in Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt not avenge," etc., though even there there is a limitation, "against the children of thy people." And it may be no less true that we find instances of imprecation in the New; as when St. Paul says (2 Tim. iv. 14), "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works," or when he exclaims (Acts xxiii. 3), "God will smite thee, thou whited wall;" or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." But even these expressions are very different from the varied, deliberate, carefully-constructed, detailed anathemas of the Psalms. And our Lord's denunciations, to which Hengstenberg refers, are in no way parallel. They are not curses upon individuals, but in fact solemn utterances of the great truth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But after all, whatever may be said of particular passages, the general tone which runs through the two covenants, is unquestionably different. To deny this is not to honour Moses, but to dishonour Christ. Matt. v. 43; xix. 8. On the other hand, we must not forget that these imprecations are not the passionate longing for personal revenge. The singer undoubtedly sees in his enemies the enemies of God and his church. They that are not with him are against God. And because the zeal of God's house even consumes him, he prays that all the doers of iniquity may be rooted out. The indignation therefore is righteous, though it may appear to us wrongly directed, or excessive in its utterance.

Once more, the very fact that a dark cloud hid God's judgment in the world to come from the view of the Old Testament saints, may be alleged in excuse of this their desire to see him take vengeance on his enemies here. How deeply the problem of God's righteousness exercised their minds, is abundantly evident from numerous places in the Psalms. They longed to see that righteousness manifested. It could be manifested, they thought, only in the evident exaltation of the righteous, and the evident destruction of the wicked here. Hence, with their eye always fixed on temporal recompense, they could even wish and pray for the destruction of the ungodly. The awful things of the world to come were to a great extent hid from their eyes. Could they have seen these, then surely their prayer would have been not, "Let the angel of the Lord persecute them," "Blot them out of thy book;" but rather with him who hung upon the cross; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 4, 8, 26.—David was about as devoid of vindictiveness as any public character who can well be named. His conduct in relation to Saul, from first to last displayed a singularly noble spirit, far removed from anything like the lust of vengeance; and the meekness with which he endured the bitter reproaches of Shimei, bore witness to the same spirit after his accession to the throne. . . . . .

When David's whole career is intelligently and fairly reviewed, it leaves on the mind the impression of a man possessed of as meek and placable a temper as was ever associated with so great strength of will, and such strong passions. Even in the heats of sudden resentment, he was not apt to be hurried into deeds of revenge. Such being the case, it would certainly have been a strange and unaccountable thing if he had shown himself less the master of his own spirit in poems composed in seasons of retirement and communion with God, especially since these very poems express a keen sense of the heinousness of the sin that has been laid to his charge. He can affirm regarding his implacable enemies, "As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." Psalm xxxv. 13, 14. "O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy): let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth." Psalm vii. 3—5. Surely one ought to think twice before putting on the imprecations an interpretation which would make them utterly incongruous with these appeals, uttered almost in the same breath.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 5.—"*As chaff.*" Literally, "As the thistledown."—*John Morison.*

Verse 6.—"*Let their way be dark and slippery.*" A horrible way! Darkness alone who feareth not? A slippery way alone who avoids not? In a dark and slippery way, how shalt thou go? where set foot? These two ills are the great punishments of men: darkness, ignorance; a slippery way, luxury. "*Let their way be darkness and slipping; and let the angel of the Lord persecute them,*" that they be not able to stand. For anyone in a dark and slippery way, when he seeth that if he move his foot he will fall, and there is no light before his feet, haply resolveth to wait until light come; but here is the angel of the Lord persecuting them.—*Augustine.*

Verse 6.—"*Slippery.*" Margin, as in Heb., *slipperiness.* This is a circumstance which adds increased terror to the image. It is not only a *dark* road, but a road made slippery by rains; a road where they are in danger every moment of sliding down a precipice where they will be destroyed.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 7.—"*They hid for me their net in a pit.*" As if David had said that they had dug a pit, and covered and hid its mouth with a net, that I might pass upon it and fall into it.—*Kimchi.*

Verse 8.—"*Let destruction come upon him at unawares.*" Or *a storm*, such as is caused in the Eastern countries by a south wind, very sudden, violent, and destructive.—*John Gill.*

Verse 8.—"*Let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.*" By giving Ahithophel rope enough, the Lord preserved David from perishing. Who will not admire that Goliath should be slain with his own sword, and that proud Haman should hold Mordecai's stirrup, and be the herald of his honour? The wicked shall be undone by their own doings; all the arrows that they shoot at the righteous shall fall upon their own pates. Maxentius built a false bridge to drown Constantine, but was drowned himself. Henry the Third of France was stabbed in the very same chamber where he had helped to contrive the cruel massacre of the French Protestants. And his brother, Charles the Ninth, who delighted in the blood of the saints, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy. It is usual with God to take persecutors in the snares and pits that they have laid for his people, as many thousands in this nation have experienced; and though Rome and her

confederates are this day a-laying of snares and traps and a-digging of pits for the righteous, who will rather burn than bow to their Baal, yet do but wait and weep, and weep and wait a little, and you shall see that the Lord will take them in the very snares and pits that they have laid and digged for his people.—*Condensed from Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 8.—"*Let his net that he hath hid catch himself.*" Thou fool, who opposest thy counsels to those of the Most High. He who devises evil for another, falls at last into his own pit, and the most cunning finds himself caught by what he had prepared for another. But virtue without guile, erect like the lofty palm, rises with greater vigour when it is oppressed.—*Pietro Metastasio*, 1698—1782.

Verse 9.—"*And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord,*" etc. While some ascribe to fortune, and others to their own skill, the praise of their deliverance from danger, and few, if any, yield the whole praise of it to God, David here declares that he will not forget the favour which God had bestowed upon him. My soul, says he, shall rejoice, not in a deliverance of the author of which it is ignorant, but in the salvation of God. To place the matter in a still stronger light, he assigns to his very bones the office of declaring the divine glory. As if not content that his tongue should be employed in this, he applies all the members of his body to the work of setting forth the praises of God. The style of speaking which he employs is hyperbolical, but in this way he shows unfeignedly that his love to God was so strong that he desired to spend his sinews and bones in declaring the reality and truth of his devotion.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 10.—"*All my bones,*" etc. These words contain the most vivid description of the highest delight which by the whole soul and body should be experienced and openly manifested. He mentions his soul (verse 9) and all his bones as about to take part in the joy, to indicate that he most heartily and with his whole body was about to rejoice, and that the joy which he would manifest would not be of an ordinary character, but of the highest order, so that each several bone should sing forth the praises of God.—*Herman Venema*, 1697—1787.

Verse 10.—"*All my bones.*" In the Scriptures emotions are generally ascribed to the viscera, the bones are usually regarded as passive ; in this place and Psalm li. 8, and in these two places only, exulting joy is attributed to the bones. Ordinary experience shows us that the intestines have sympathy with our passionate excitements, but we have no consciousness of the bones becoming sympathetically sensitive. The expression therefore is highly poetical, and indicates that the joy intended would be far beyond ordinary and common delight ; it would be so profound that even the most callous part of the human frame would partake of it. Doubtless the poetry has a basis of truth in it, for though we may not perceive it, there is most assuredly a true and real sympathy with our mental states in every particle of bone and muscle, as well as in those tender organs which are more apparently affected.—*C. H. S. Thoughts suggested by a passage in "Biblical Psychology," by Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 10.—"*All my bones.*" That is, whatsoever strength and vigour is in me it shall be spent in celebrating thy praises. Or, although I have nothing left me but skin and bones, so poor am I grown, yet I will not be wanting to the work.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 10.—My bones are riving through my skin, and yet all my bones are praising him. "I said, I am cast out of thy sight, but I will look again towards thy holy temple."—*Thomas Halyburton*, 1674—1711.

Verse 11.—"*They laid to my charge things that I knew not.*" You will say, Why does God permit wicked people to lay to the charge of the godly such things as they are clear of : God if he pleased could prevent it, and stop the mouths of the wicked, that they should not be able to speak against his children ?

Answer—As all things work for the best to them that love God, so this works for the good of God's people. God doth permit it for the good of his people, and thus he frustrates the hopes of the wicked: they intend evil against the godly, and God disposes of it for good. As Joseph said to his brethren, "You intended evil against me, and God disposed of it for good;" so we may say to such as falsely slander God's people, You intended evil against the people of God, but God disposes of it for good. There is fivefold good that God brings out of it to his people. *First*, God doth by this means humble them, and brings them to examine what is amiss: so that though they be clear of that crime laid to their charge, yet they will then examine whether there be nothing else amiss betwixt God and them; they will search their hearts, and walk more humbly, and cleave more close to the Lord. *Secondly*, God doth by this means bring them oftener upon their knees, to seek unto him, to plead their cause, and to clear their innocency. How oft did the prophet speak unto God when the wicked did falsely accuse him; how did he make his moan at the throne of grace unto God, beseeching him to plead his cause, and to keep him close in his way, that the wicked might not rejoice at his downfall! So when God's people see that it is that which the wicked would have, that which is their joy, to see the godly fall into such and such a sin; then the godly will pray more earnestly with David, Lord, lead me in a right path because of my observers; then they will be earnest with God to keep them from falling into that sin that the wicked desire they might fall into; and this is a second good that comes of it. *Thirdly*, God doth use the reproach of the wicked as a preventing medicine against that crime which the wicked lay to their charge. The godly have unrenewed nature as well as renewed, and if God should leave them never so little to themselves, they are not their own keepers, they might fall into that sin which the wicked lay to their charge: and every godly man and woman may say when they are falsely accused, It is God's mercy that I did not fall into that sin they lay to my charge. God doth use wicked people's tongues as a warning against such a sin, that when they see how the wicked joy at a brat of their own hatching, then they consider, if the wicked thus joy without a cause, what would they do if they had just cause? Well, by the help of God this shall be a warning to me for ever to watch against that sin: for the time to come I will pray more against that particular sin than I have done, and watch more against that sin than I have done; through God's help they shall never have occasion to rejoice over me in that kind. Truly, I verily believe many a child of God can say by experience, I never should have prayed and watched against such a sin so much, had not God used the tongues of the wicked as preventing physic: I knew not my own heart, but that I might have fallen into such and such a sin had not God by this means hedged up my way with thorns; and this is the third good comes of it. *Fourthly*, God doth by this means exercise the graces of his people by letting them undergo bad report as well as good report: he tries whether they will cleave close to him in all conditions, as Psalm xliv. 15—17. *Fifthly*, God doth by this means teach them how to judge of others when they are falsely accused. For the time to come they will not receive a false report against their neighbour; they will know the truth of a thing before they believe it, and they know how to comfort others in the like condition; and thus God disposes of it for good, and thus God makes the wicked the servant of his people in that very thing which the wicked think to wrong them most in; for he uses the wicked as the rod and wisp, to scour off the rust of their graces and to correct their security; and when the rod hath done its office then it is thrown into the fire: and thus you see how God disposes of the wicked's false accusations of his people for good.—*Zephaniah Smyth's Sermon*, "*The Malignant's Plot*," 1647.

Verse 12.—"*They rewarded me evil for good.*" For the good David did in killing Goliath, and slaying his ten thousands of the Philistines, and thereby saving his king and country, Saul and his courtiers envied him, and sought to

slay him: so our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the good he did to the Jews, by healing their bodies of diseases, and preaching the gospel to them for the benefit of their souls, was rewarded with reproaches and persecutions, and at last with the shameful death of the cross; and in like manner are his people used, but this is an evil that shall not go unpunished: see Prov. xvii. 13.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"*To the spoiling of my soul.*" They robbed not his body of goods but his soul of consolation. They bereaved his soul (that is the word), like a widow who loses her children in whom she delighted and found succour. They were not content with injuring his estate, but they were for ruining the man himself by their undeserved malice, they attacked him in name and reputation, which were as dear to him as his sons and daughters, or even as his soul. It is evermore an injury to the soul to be attacked with slander, it puts a man into a warring attitude, endangers his peace of mind, imperils his enjoyment of quiet contemplation, and tends to interrupt his communion with God. Thus the spiritual nature is despoiled and suffers bereavement.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 13.—"*My prayer returned into, or was directed to, my bosom.*" Of the many interpretations that are given of this passage, that appears to me the most probable which derives it from the posture of the worshipper; who standing with his head inclined downward toward his bosom, turned away his attention from all external objects, and uttered his mournful and earnest requests, as if they were directed to his own bosom. Such a posture of devotion is in use both among Jews and Mohammedans.—*Koehler in Repertor. Lit. Orient.; and Reland de Relig. Mohammedica, quoted by Walford in loc.*

Verse 13 (*last clause*).—We may read it thus: *Let my prayer return into my bosom;* that is, I wished no worse to them than to myself: let me receive of God such good as I prayed for them. See Psalm lxxix. 12.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 14.—"*For his mother.*" On account of the plurality of wives in an Eastern household, the sons are usually far more attached to their mother than their father. Their father they share with a numerous band of half-brothers, who are envious of them, or of whom they are jealous, but their mother is all their own, with her they are brought up in childhood; she takes their part in youth, in the numerous battles of the harem; and on their part when they are grown up, they love her intensely, and hence their mourning at her decease is of the bitterest kind.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 14.—"*His mother.*" Mahomet was once asked what relation had the strongest claim upon our affection and respect; when he instantly replied, "The mother, the mother, the mother."

Verse 14 (*last clause*). *Bewaileth* his *mother: mourneth at her funeral.* In this case the affections are most strong. Therefore the priests were permitted to mourn for such. Levit. xxi. 1, 2, 3.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 15.—"*But in mine adversity they rejoiced,*" etc.—Do not glory in your neighbour's ruins. The fire-fly leaps and dances in the fire, and so do many wicked men rejoice in the sufferings of others. Such as rejoice in the sufferings of others are sick of the devil's disease; but from that disease the Lord deliver all your souls. 'Tis sad to insult over those whom God hath humbled; 'tis high wickedness to triumph over those to whom God hath given a cup of astonishment to drink. Such as make the desolations of their neighbours to be the matter either of their secret repast, or open exultation, such may fear that the very dregs of divine wrath are reserved for them. 'Tis bad playing upon the harp because others have been put to hang their harps upon the willows. We must not pray with him in the tragedy, that it may rain calamities; nor with Clemens' Gnostic, Give me calamities that I may glory in them. There cannot be a greater evidence of a wicked heart, than for a man to be merry because others are in misery. "He that is glad at calamities (that is, at the calamities of others) shall not be unpunished." Prov. xvii. 5. If God be God,

such as congratulate our miseries instead of condoling them, shall be sure to be punished with the worst of punishments; for such do not only sin against the law of grace, but also against the very law of nature; the law of nature teaching men to sympathise with those that are in misery, and not to rejoice over them because of their miseries. O sirs, do not make others' mourning your music, do not make others' tears your wine; as you would not be made drunk at last with the wine of astonishment.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 15.—"*But in mine adversity they rejoiced,*" etc. Marvellous prophecy of the cross! second only, if indeed second, to that in the twenty-second Psalm. Still closer to the history if we take the Vulgate: *the scourges* were gathered *together upon me.* Even so, O Lord Jesus, the ploughers ploughed upon thy back, and made long furrows: precious furrows for us, where are sown patience for the present life, and glory in the next; where are sown hope that maketh not ashamed, and love that many waters cannot quench. "*The very abjects.*" Even those worst of abjects, who said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are;" who had set the poor sinner before the Lord, with their "Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned." "*Making mouths at me.*" And is it not wonderful that, well knowing the prophecy, yet the chief priests and scribes should have so fulfilled it, as that it should be written concerning them, "They that passed by mocked him, wagging their heads"?—*Lewis de Grenada*, 1504—1588.

Verse 15.—"*In mine adversity they rejoiced.*" Now, as men often relent at seeing the misfortunes of their enemies, so that they cease to hate or persecute those who are already miserably wretched, it was an evidence of the very cruel and fierce spirit by which David's former friends were actuated against him, when, upon seeing him cast down and afflicted, they were rather by this incited furiously and insolently to assail him.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 15.—"*The abjects.*" *The very abjects* (Prayer Book Version). The Hebrew word *Nechim*, thus translated, comes from a verb signifying *to be smitten.* Hence, in the Septuagint it is rendered *scourges.* But it may also be rendered, with Jerome, *smiters*, and may mean *smitten with the tongue.* Comp. Jer. xviii. 18. Another of its meanings is, according to Buxtorf, the *wry-legged, the lame;* and so it is used in 2 Sam. iv. 4; ix. 3; whence the epithet of *Necho* was given to one of the Pharaohs who halted in his gait. Our translators seem to have understood the word in this last sense, as a term of contempt.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 15.—David, having showed how compassionate he was to his enemies in their affliction (verse 14), he presently shows (verse 15), how incompassionate, or barbarously cruel rather, his enemies were to him in his. "*Abjects*" are vile persons, men smitten in their estates and credits; yea, often as slaves or ill servants smitten with cudgels or whips. So a learned translator renders the Psalm, *The smitten gathered against me;* that is, vile men who deserve to be beaten and cudgelled.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 16.—"*With hypocritical mockers in feasts.*" Some cannot be merry, but it must be with Scripture; if they want a little diversion, the saints must be the subject of their discourse! they can vent their profane jests upon the word of God; this is their pastime over their cups upon the ale-bench. How ready they are with their contumelious reflections; they have learnt their father's dialect, they are accusers of the brethren, their speech bewrays them to be Hellians. You know that in ordinary, we can tell what countryman a person is by his speech, every country having almost a peculiar idiom; so it is here, these scoffers at religion by speaking the language of hell, let us understand whence they are. They have, it may be, a little wit, which they set off with a sort of an air in rhetorical raillery, and oh, how quick and sharp when they are upon this subject! These scoffing Ishmaelites are seated in the devil's chair, somewhat above their brethren in iniquity, as most deserving the place; and there is less ground to hope that such persons will be savingly wrought upon who

arrive to such a height in sin as to make a mock of it, and to sport with holiness, than of others. Persons are got a great way towards hell when they mock at what is serious, and that with delight. This the Lord will visit for in his due time; for he knows who they are that so dishonour him by reproaching them that are his.—*Oliver Heywood.*

Verse 16.—"*Hypocritical mockers in feasts.*" בְּחַנְפֵי ל׳ מ׳. Very difficult. The word מָצוֹג, in Kings xvii. 12, the only other passage where it occurs, means "a cake." Hence ל׳ מ׳ is interpreted by Gesenius and other to mean, hangers-on at the tables of the rich (lit. "cake-mockers"), whose business it was, by witticisms and buffoonery to make entertainment for the guests, and who got their dinner in return, like the Gr. ψωμοκόλακες, κνισοκόλακες, and the Mediæv. *Lat. buccellarii.* Then the words would mean, "Amongst the profanest."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.* [Would not our word *loafers* be somewhat analogous to these cake-eaters of antiquity !]—*C. H. S.*

Verse 16.—"*Hypocritical mockers.*" David aggravates the sin of those jeering companions who made him their table-talk, and could not taste their cheer except seasoned with some salt jest quibbled out at him, with this, that they were "*hypocritical mockers;*" they did it slily, and wrapped up their scoffs, it is like in such language as might make some think, who did not well observe them, that they applauded him. There is a way of commending which some have learned to use when they mean to cast the greatest scorn upon those they hate bitterly, and these hypocritical mockers deserve the chair to be given them from all other scorners.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 16.—"*Mockers in feasts.*" If it were known at a feast that there was any one present or absent, whom the host disliked, it was customary for the guests to "make fun of them," and use sarcastic language respecting them. These are the "*hypocritical mockers in feasts.*"—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 17.—Satan no sooner spies our wanderings, but he presently runs with a complaint to God, filing bills against us in the star-chamber of heaven, where the matter would go hard with us, but for the Great Lord Chancellor of peace, our Advocate Jesus Christ. As God keeps all our tears in a bottle, and registereth the very groans of our holy passion in a book, so Satan keeps a record of our sins, and solicits justice against us. Were God like man, subject to passions, or incensible by the suggestions of the common barrator, woe were us. But he will hear one son of truth before ten thousand fathers of lying. No matter what the plaintiff libelleth, when the judge acquitteth. We have forfeited our estates by treason, and the busy devil begs us; but there is one that steps in, and pleads a former grant, and that both by promise and purchase. "*Lord, rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.*" Lord Jesus, challenge thine own; let not Satan enter upon by force or fraud, what thou hast bought with thine own blood.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 17.—"*My darling.*" In Poole's Synopsis the critics explain this name for the soul, as my only one, my solitary one, desolate, deserted, and destitute of human hope. Such is the soul under sore affliction. See Ps. xxii. 21. "*From the lions.*" Daniel in the den was literally where David was spiritually. Shut in among fierce, cruel, and angry creatures, and himself defenceless, having no weapon but prayer, no helper but the Lord. The people of God may be exposed to the lions of hell, and their roarings may grievously affright them; but the soul which is their "darling" is also God's dear one, and therefore they shall be rescued.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 19.—"*Wink with the eye.*" Showing pleasure in their eyes because of my evil.—*Francis Vatablus*, 1545.

Verse 19.—"*Wink the eye.*" This was a sign which malicious persons made to each other when the object of their malice was gained, scornfully twisting their eyes together. The Hebrew word here has no sufficiently expressive substitute in English.—*Benjamin Weiss.*

Verse 21.—"*Our eye hath seen.*" *Eye* for *eyes*, unless we would say that all the wicked are so conjoined, that they may seem to have but one eye, heart, head.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 21.—Yet, O ye saints, divulge not these things to wicked men; whisper them softly one to another, with fear and trembling, lest some profane wretch or other overhear you, and take that for encouragement that was only meant for caution. What is more common than for the vilest sinners to plead for their excuse, or warrant rather, the foul miscarriages of God's dearest saints? Thus the drunkard looks upon holy Noah as a pot-companion, whereby he discovers his nakedness in a worse sense than ever Cham did; and thus the unclean sensualist quotes David, and calls him in to be the patron of his debauchery. Certainly, if there be any grief that can overcast the perfect joys of the saints in heaven, it is that their names and examples should, to the great dishonour of God, be produced by wicked and sinful men, to countenance their grossest sins and wickednesses. But let such know, that God hath set up these in his church to be monuments of his mercy, to declare to humble and penitent sinners how great sins he can pardon; yet if any hereupon embolden themselves in sin, instead of being set up as monuments of mercy, God will set them up as pillars of salt.—*Ezekiel Hopkins (Bishop).*

Verse 21.—He who rejoices in another's fall rejoices in the devil's victory.—*Ambrose, quoted in Nichol's Proverbs.*

Verses 21, 22:—

> They gape and drawe their mouthes in scorneful wise,
> And crie, fie, fie, wee sawe it with our eyes.
> But thou their deed, (O Lord!) dost also see;
> Then bee not silent soe, nor farr from mee.
>
> *Sir John Davies.*

Verse 23.—"*My God and my Lord.*" The cry of Thomas when he saw the wounds of Jesus. If he did not count our Lord to be divine, neither does David here ascribe Deity to Jehovah, for there is no difference except in the order of the words and the tongue in which they were spoken, the meaning is identical. What words they are, with their two eyes seeing Jehovah in two aspects yet as one, grasping him with two hands in the double "my" to one heart for the word is but one, bowing before him on both knees to worship him in lowliest reverence. Well might Nouet, in his exposition of the words as used by Thomas, exclaim, "Oh, sweet word, I will say it all my life long; I will say it in the hour of death; I will say it in eternity."—*C. H. S.*

Verse 24.—"*O Lord my God.*" O Jehovah my God; here is another precious word. He takes Jehovah to be his God, in opposition to those who make idols, or riches, or their own lusts their God. He claims a full possession of all that is in the great I AM. Even though he views him as a judge he lays the hand of faith upon his God, and flinches not even before the blaze of his righteousness. It is a noble word, a grand utterance of faith; he who can pronounce that word "my" from his inmost soul in such a connection may well laugh to scorn all his enemies.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 25.—"*Let them not say we have swallowed him up.*" And even if they could, like Jonah's whale, they would soon be sickened of their feast. A living child of God were more easily swallowed than digested by the malice of hell.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 27.—See how the hearts of the saints have been drawn out against their persecutors. Prayers are the arms that in times of persecution the saints have still had recourse to. The Romans being in great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temples of their gods to fight with their enemies, and so they overcame them: so when the

people of God have been hard put to it by reason of afflictions and persecutions, the weapons that they have fled to have been prayers and tears, and with these they have overcome their persecutors.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 28.—"*My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.*" See now I have made a discourse something longer; ye are wearied. Who endureth to praise God all the day long? I will suggest a remedy whereby thou mayest praise God all the day long if thou wilt. Whatever thou dost, do well, and thou hast praised God. When thou singest a hymn, thou praisest God, but what doth thy tongue, unless thy heart also praise him? Hast thou ceased from singing hymns, and departed that thou mayest refresh thyself? Be not drunken, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou go away to sleep? Rise not to do evil, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou transact business? Do no wrong, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou till thy field? Raise not strife, and thou hast praised God. In the innocency of thy works prepare thyself to praise God all the day long.—*Augustine.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Jesus our Advocate and Champion; our friend in the courts of heaven and the battles of earth.

Verse 2.—Jesus armed as the defender of the faithful.

Verse 3.—Enemies kept at arm's length. How the Lord does this, and the blessedness of it to us.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—Full assurance. An assurance positive, personal, spiritual, present, divine, complete, coming by a word from God.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—Heaven made sure.—*Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

Verse 4.—The everlasting confusion of the devil.

Verse 6.—The horrible pilgrimage of the ungodly.

Verse 6.—The trinity of dangers in the pathway of the wicked, their way dark with ignorance, and slippery with temptation, while behind them is the avenger.

Verse 8.—Destruction at unawares, an awful topic.

Verse 9.—Joy in God and in his salvation.

Verse 10.—A matchless God, and his matchless grace—these are the themes. An experienced heart, thoroughly quickened—this is the songster; and from this cometh matchless music.

The music of a shattered harp.

Verse 11.—The meanness, cruelty, sinfulness, and commonness of slander.

Verse 12.—How a soul may be robbed.

Verse 13.—Christian sympathy even for the froward.

Verse 13 (*last clause*).—Personal benefit of intercessory prayer.

Verses 13, 14.—Compassion to the sick.—*C. Simeon.*

Verse 15.—The shameful conspiracy of men against our Lord Jesus at his passion.

Verse 17.—The limit of divine endurance.

Verse 18.—The duty, blessedness, and seasonableness of public praise.

Verse 22.—Omniscience pleaded, a word sought for, presence requested, action entreated, affiance urged as a claim.

Verse 25.—The ungodly man's delight, and the righteous man's refuge.

Verse 26.—The convict dress of the wicked—"*clothed with shame,*" etc.

Verse 27 (*last clause*).—What is that prosperity in which the Lord hath pleasure?

Verse 28.—A blessed theme, a fitting tongue, an endless speech.

PSALM XXXVI.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician.—*He who had the leadership of the Temple service was charged with the use of this song in public worship. What is everybody's business is never done. It was well to have one person specially to attend to the service of song in the house of the Lord.* Of David the servant of the Lord. *This would seem to indicate that the Psalm peculiarly befits one who esteems it an honour to be called Jehovah's servant. It is* THE SONG OF HAPPY SERVICE; *such a one as all may join in who bear the easy yoke of Jesus. The wicked are contrasted with the righteous, and the great Lord of devout men is heartily extolled; thus obedience to so good a Master is indirectly insisted on, and rebellion against him is plainly condemned.*

DIVISIONS.—*From* 1 *to* 4 *David describes the rebellious: in* 5 *to* 9 *he extols the various attributes of the Lord; in* 10 *and* 11 *he addresses the Lord in prayer, and in the last verse his faith sees in vision the overthrow of all the workers of iniquity.*

EXPOSITION.

THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes.

2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

3 The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.

4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil.

1. "*The transgression of the wicked,*" His daring and wanton sin; his breaking the bounds of law and justice. "*Saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*" Men's sins have a voice to godly ears. They are the outer index of an inner evil. It is clear that men who dare to sin constantly and presumptuously cannot respect the great Judge of all. Despite the professions of unrighteous men, when we see their unhallowed actions our heart is driven to the conclusion that they have no religion whatever. Unholiness is clear evidence of ungodliness. Wickedness is the fruit of an atheistic root. This may be made clear to the candid head by cogent reasoning, but it is clear already and intuitively to the pious heart. If God be everywhere, and I fear him, how can I dare to break his laws in his very presence? He must be a desperate traitor who will rebel in the monarch's own halls. Whatever theoretical opinions bad men may avow, they can only be classed with atheists, since they are such practically. Those eyes which have no fear of God before them now, shall have the terrors of hell before them for ever.

2. "*For.*" Here is the argument to prove the proposition laid down in the former verse. David here runs over the process of reasoning by which he had become convinced that wicked men have no proper idea of God or respect for him. God-fearing men see their sins and bewail them, where the reverse is the case we may be sure there is no fear of God. "*He flattereth himself in his own eyes.*" He counts himself a fine fellow, worthy of great respect. He quiets his conscience, and so deceives his own judgment as to reckon himself a pattern of excellence; if not for morality, yet for having sense enough not to be enslaved by rules which are bonds to others. He is the free-thinker, the man of strong mind, the hater of cant, the philosopher; and the servants of God are, in his esteem, mean-spirited and narrow-minded. Of all flatteries this is the most absurd and dangerous. Even the silliest bird will not set traps for itself; the

most pettifogging attorney will not cheat himself. To smooth over one's own conduct to one's conscience (which is the meaning of the Hebrew) is to smooth one's own path to hell. The descent to eternal ruin is easy enough, without making a glissade of it, as self-flatterers do. "*Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.*" At length he is found out and detested, despite his self-conceit. Rottenness smells sooner or later too strong to be concealed. There is a time when the leprosy cannot be hidden. At last the old house can no longer be propped up, and falls about the tenant's ears: so there is a limit to a man's self-gratulation; he is found out amid general scorn, and can no longer keep up the farce which he played so well. If this happen not in this life, the hand of death will let light in upon the coveted character, and expose the sinner to shame and contempt.

The self-flattering process plainly proves the atheism of sinners, since the bare reflection that God sees them would render such self-flatteries extremely difficult, if not impossible. Belief in God, like light reveals, and then our sin and evil are perceived; but wicked men are in the dark, for they cannot see what is so clearly within them and around them that it stares them in the face.

3. "*The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit.*" This pair of hell dogs generally hunt together, and what one does not catch the other will; if iniquity cannot win by oppression, deceit will gain by chicanery. When the heart is so corrupt as to flatter itself, the tongue follows suit. The open sepulchre of the throat reveals the foulness of the inner nature. God-fearing men make a conscience of their words, and if they sin through infirmity they do not invent excuses, or go about to boast of their wickedness: but because wicked men think little of evil and artful speeches, we may be clear that God rules not in their souls. The original by declaring that the words of the wicked are falsehood and deceit is peculiarly strong; as if they were not only false in quality, but actual falseness itself. "*He hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*" From the good way he has altogether gone aside. Men who fear God proceed from strength to strength in the right path, but godless men soon forsake what little good they once knew. How could men apostatise if they had respect unto the supreme Judge? Is it not because they grow more and more forgetful of God, that in due season they relinquish even that hypocritical reverence of him which in former days they maintained in order to flatter their souls?

4. "*He deviseth mischief upon his bed.*" His place of rest becomes the place for plotting. His bed is a hot-bed for poisonous weeds. God-fearing men meditate upon God and his service; but when men turn all their thoughts and inventive faculties towards evil, their godlessness is proved to a demonstration. He hath the devil for his bed-fellow who lies abed and schemes how to sin. God is far from him. "*He setteth himself in a way that is not good.*" When he gets up he resolutely and persistently pursues the mischief which he planned. The worst of ways he prefers for his walking, for he has taught his heart to love filthiness, having accustomed himself to revel in it in imagination. "*He abhorreth not evil.*" So far from having a contempt and abhorrence for evil, he even rejoices in it, and patronises it. He never hates a wrong thing because it is wrong, but he meditates on it, defends it, and practises it.

What a portrait of a graceless man these few verses afford us! His jauntiness of conscience, his licentiousness of speech, his intentness upon wrong-doing, his deliberate and continued preference of iniquity, and withal his atheistical heart, are all photographed to the life. Lord, save us from being such.

5 Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; *and* thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.

6 Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

7 How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.
9 For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

From the baseness of the wicked the psalmist turns his contemplation to the glory of God. Contrasts are impressive.

5. "*Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.*" Like the ethereal blue, it encompasses the whole earth, smiling upon universal nature, acting as a canopy for all the creatures of earth, surmounting the loftiest peaks of human provocations, and rising high above the mists of mortal transgression. Clear sky is evermore above, and mercy calmly smiles above the din and smoke of this poor world. Darkness and clouds are but of earth's lower atmosphere: the heavens are evermore serene, and bright with innumerable stars. Divine mercy abides in its vastness of expanse, and matchless patience, all unaltered by the rebellions of man. When we can measure the heavens, then shall we bound the mercy of the Lord. Towards his own servants especially, in the salvation of the Lord Jesus, he has displayed grace higher than the heaven of heavens, and wider than the universe. O that the atheist could but see this, how earnestly would he long to become a servant of Jehovah! "*Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*" Far, far above all comprehension is the truth and faithfulness of God. He never fails, nor forgets, nor falters, nor forfeits his word. Afflictions are like clouds, but the divine truthfulness is all around them. While we are under the cloud we are in the region of God's faithfulness; when we mount above it we shall not need such an assurance. To every word of threat, or promise, prophecy or covenant, the Lord has exactly adhered, for he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent.

6. "*Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.*" Firm and unmoved, lofty and sublime. As winds and hurricanes shake not an Alp, so the righteousness of God is never in any degree affected by circumstances; he is always just. Who can bribe the Judge of all the earth, or who can, by threatening, compel him to pervert judgment? Not even to save his elect would the Lord suffer his righteousness to be set aside. No awe inspired by mountain scenery can equal that which fills the soul when it beholds the Son of God slain as a victim to vindicate the justice of the Inflexible Lawgiver. Right across the path of every unholy man who dreams of heaven stand the towering Andes of divine righteousness, which no unregenerate sinner can ever climb. Among great mountains lie slumbering avalanches, and there the young lightnings try their callow wings until the storm rushes down amain from the awful peaks; so against the great day of the Lord's wrath the Lord has laid up in the mountains of his righteousness dreadful ammunition of war with which to overwhelm his adversaries. "*Thy judgments are a great deep.*" God's dealings with men are not to be fathomed by every boaster who demands to see a why for every wherefore. The Lord is not to be questioned by us as to why this and why that. He has reasons, but he does not choose to submit them to our foolish consideration. Far and wide, terrible and irresistible like the ocean are the providential dispensations of God: at one time they appear as peaceful as the unrippled sea of glass; at another tossed with tempest and whirlwind, but evermore most glorious and full of mystery. Who shall discover the springs of the sea? He who shall do this may hope to comprehend the providence of the Eternal.

> "Undiscovered sea!
> Into thy dark, unknown, mysterious caves,
> And secret haunts unfathomably deep,
> Beneath all visible retired, none went
> And came again to tell the wonders there."

Yet as the deep mirrors the sky, so the mercy of the Lord is to be seen reflected

in all the arrangements of his government on earth, and over the profound depth the covenant rainbow casts its arch of comfort, for the Lord is faithful in all that he doeth.

"*O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.*" All the myriads of creatures, rational and irrational, are fed by Jehovah's hand. The countless beasts, the innumerable birds, the inconceivable abundance of fishes, the all but infinite armies of insects, all owe their continuance in life to the unceasing outgoings of the divine power. What a view of God this presents to us! What a debased creature must he be who sees no trace of such a God, and feels no awe of him!

7. "*How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God.*" Here we enter into the Holy of Holies. Benevolence, and mercy, and justice, are everywhere, but the excellence of that mercy only those have known whose faith has lifted the veil and passed into the brighter presence of the Lord; these behold the excellency of the Lord's mercy. The word translated *excellent* may be rendered "precious;" no gem or pearl can ever equal in value a sense of the Lord's love. This is such a brilliant as angels wear. Kings' regalia are a beggarly collection of worthless pebbles when compared with the tender mercy of Jehovah. David could not estimate it, and therefore, after putting a note of admiration, he left our hearts and imagination, and, better still, our experience, to fill up the rest. He writes *how excellent!* because he cannot tell us the half of it. "*Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*" The best of reasons for the best of courses. The figure is very beautiful. The Lord overshadows his people as a hen protects her brood, or as an eagle covers its young; and we as the little ones run under the blessed shelter and feel at rest. To cower down under the wings of God is so sweet. Although the enemy be far too strong for us, we have no fear, for we nestle under the Lord's wing. O that more of Adam's race knew the excellency of the heavenly shelter! It made Jesus weep to see how they refused it: our tears may well lament the same evil.

8. "*They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.*" Those who learn to put their trust in God shall be received into his house, and shall share in the provision laid up therein. The dwelling-place of the Lord is not confined to any place, and hence reside where we may, we may regard our dwelling, if we be believers, as one room in the Lord's great house; and we shall, both in providence and grace, find a soul-contenting store supplied to us as the result of living by faith in nearness to the Lord. If we regard the assembly of the saints as being peculiarly the house of God, believers shall, indeed, find in sacred worship the richest spiritual food. Happy is the soul that can drink in the sumptuous dainties of the gospel—nothing can so completely fill the soul. "*And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.*" As they have the fruits of Eden to feed on, so shall they have the river of Paradise to drink from. God's everlasting love bears to us a constant and ample comfort, of which grace makes us to drink by faith, and then our pleasure is of the richest kind. The Lord not only brings us to this river, but makes us drink: herein we see the condescension of divine love. Heaven will, in the fullest sense, fulfil these words; but they who trust in the Lord enjoy the antepast even here. The happiness given to the faithful is that of God himself; purified spirits joy with the same joy as the Lord himself. "That my joy may be in you, that your joy may be full."

9. "*For with thee is the fountain of life.*" This verse is made of simple words, but like the first chapter of John's Gospel, it is very deep. From the Lord, as from an independent self-sufficient spring, all creature life proceeds, by him it is sustained, through him alone can it be perfected. Life is in the creature, but the fountain of it is only in the Creator. Of spiritual life, this is true in the most emphatic sense; "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," "and we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God." "*In thy light shall we see light.*" Light is the glory of life. Life in the dark is misery, and rather death than life. The Lord alone can give natural, intellectual, and spiritual life; he alone can make

life bright and lustrous. In spiritual things the knowledge of God sheds a light on all other subjects. We need no candle to see the sun, we see it by its own radiance, and then see everything else by the same lustre. We never see Jesus by the light of self, but self in the light of Jesus. No inward intelligence of ours leads us to receive the Spirit's light, but the rather, it often helps to quench the sacred beam; purely and only by his own illumination, the Holy Ghost lights up the dark recesses of our heart's ungodliness. Vain are they who look to learning and human wit, one ray from the throne of God is better than the noonday splendour of created wisdom. Lord, give me the sun, and let those who will delight in the wax candles of superstition and the phosphorescence of corrupt philosophy. Faith derives both light and life from God, and hence she neither dies nor darkens.

10 O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

10. "*O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee.*" We ask no more than a continuance of the past mercy. Lord, extend this grace of thine to all the days of all who have been taught to know thy faithful love, thy tenderness, thine immutability and omnipotence. As they have been taught of the Lord to know the Lord, so go on to instruct them and perfect them. This prayer is the heart of the believer asking precisely that which the heart of his God is prepared to grant. It is well when the petition is but the reflection of the promise. "*And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.*" As thou hast never failed the righteous, so abide thou in the same manner their defender and avenger. The worst thing to be feared by the man of God is to be forsaken of heaven, hence this prayer; but the fear is groundless, hence the peace which faith brings to us. Learn from this verse, that although a continuance of mercy is guaranteed in the covenant, we are yet to make it a matter of prayer. For this good thing will the Lord be enquired of.

11. "*Let not the foot of pride come against me.*" The general prayer is here turned into a particular and personal one for himself. Pride is the devil's sin. Good men may well be afraid of proud men, for the serpent's seed will never cease to bite the heel of the godly. Fain would proud scoffers spurn the saints or trample them under foot: against their malice prayer lifts up her voice. No foot shall come upon us, no hand shall prevail against us, while Jehovah is on our side. "*Let not the hand of the wicked remove me.*" Suffer me not to be driven about as a fugitive, nor torn from my place like an uprooted tree. Violence with both hand and foot, with means fair and means foul, strove to overthrow the psalmist, but he resorts to his great Patron, and sings a song of triumph in anticipation of the defeat of his foes.

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

12. "*There are the workers of iniquity fallen.*" Faith sees them scattered on the plain. There! before our very eyes sin, death, and hell, lie prostrate. Behold the vanquished foes! "*They are cast down.*" Providence and grace have dashed them from their vantage ground. Jesus has already thrown all the foes of his people upon their faces, and in due time all sinners shall find it so. "*And shall not be able to rise.*" The defeat of the ungodly and of the powers of evil is final, total, irretrievable. Glory be to God, however high the powers of darkness may carry it at this present, the time hastens on when God shall defend the right, and give to evil such a fall as shall for ever crush the hopes of hell; while those who trust in the Lord shall eternally praise him and rejoice in his holy name.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*To the Chief Musician,*" has given rise to many conjectures. In the Septuagint the Hebrew word is translated, *εἰς τὸ τέλος, to the end;* a meaning so utterly vague as to defy all reasonable conjecture. . . . . The meaning of the term appears to be this: the Psalms in which it occurs were given in charge by their inspired authors to the Chief Musician overseeing some specific band of music, whether harps, psalteries, or wind instruments.—*John Jebb, A.M., in "A Literal Translation of the Book of Psalms,"* 1846.

Title.—"*The servant of the Lord.*" David only uses this title here and in Psalm eighteen. In both he describes the dealings of God both with the righteous and the wicked, and it is most fit that at the very outset he should take his place with the servants of the Lord.—*C. H. S.*

Whole Psalm.—First part.—A character of a wicked man (verse 1). 1. He calls evil good (verse 2). 2. He continues in it. 3. He is an hypocrite (verse 3). 4. He is obstinate. 5. He is studious in wickedness (verse 4). *Second part.*—God's patience and mercy (verses 5, 6). 1. To all, even all creatures. 2. But particularly to his people, which he admires. Upon which the faithful (1) trust, (2) are satisfied (verses 7, 8). The *Third part.*—He prays that this effect may light, 1. On God's people (verse 10). 2. On himself (verse 11). 3. His acclamation upon it (verse 12).—*William Nicholson (Bishop)*, 1662.

Verse 1.—In this Psalm we have a description of sin, especially as it appears in those who have openly broken God's bands. The introduction is very striking; "*The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*" How could the "*transgression of the wicked*" speak within the *heart* of him who in the inscription of the Psalm declares himself to be *the servant of* JEHOVAH? These words are generally understood as signifying that the outward conduct of the sinner, as often as he thought of it, naturally suggested this conclusion to his mind, that he was destitute of all fear of God. But they may perhaps admit of another meaning, equally agreeable to the literal reading; *wickedness, saith of the wicked, within my heart*, etc. According to this view, the psalmist meant that notwithstanding the external pretences of the wicked, and all their attempts to cover their iniquity, he was certain that they had no real sense of the presence of God, that they secretly renounced his authority. How was he assured of this? By a comparison of their conduct with the dictates of the heart. He could not indeed look into their hearts, but he could look into his own, and *there* he found corruption so strong, that were it not for the fear of God that was implanted within him, he would be as bad as they.—*John Jamieson.*

Verse 1.—It is not the imperfection or shortcoming in the fear of God, but the being destitute of it altogether, that proveth a wicked man: "*There is no fear of God before his eyes.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1 (*last clause*).—"*Not having the fear of God before his eyes,*" has become inwoven into proceedings in criminal courts. When a man has no fear of God, he is prepared for any crime.

Total depravity is not too strong a term to describe human wickedness. The sinner has "*no fear of God.*" Where that is wanting, how can there be any piety? And if there is no piety, there must be total want of right affections, and that is the very essence of depravity.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1.—Durst any mock God with flourishes and formalities in religion, if they feared him? Durst any provoke God to his face by real and open wickednesses, if they feared him? Durst any sin with the judgments of God fresh bleeding before their eyes, if they feared the Lord and his wrath? Durst they sin with heaps of precious mercy before their eyes, if they feared the Lord and his goodness? Durst any flatter either others or themselves with hopes of

impunity in their sin, if they feared the Lord and his truth? Durst any slight their own promises, professions, protestations, oaths, or design the entangling of others by them, rather than the binding of themselves, did they fear the Lord and his faithfulness, even the Lord who keepeth covenant and promise for ever? All these and many more transgressions of the wicked (all these ways of transgression are found among the wicked, it were well if none of them were found among those who have a name of godliness; I say, all these transgressions of the wicked) say, "*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 1.—The *wicked* man has no regard to the oracles of God: he has one in his own heart, which dictates nothing but rebellion.—*Zachary Mudge.*

Verse 2.—"*For he flattereth himself in his own eyes.*" The matter which this self-flattery especially concerns is sin, as appears from the following clause. He deceives himself as to its nature and consequences, its evil and aggravations, and he continues to do so "*until his iniquity be found to be hateful;*" till it be fully discovered, and appear in its magnitude and atrocious circumstances both to himself and others, by some awful divine judgment, such as that mentioned in the last verse of the Psalm: "*There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*" He adduces this self-deceit and continuance in it, as illustrating the truth of that judgment he had formed of the state of such a person: "*There is no fear of God before his eyes: for he flattereth himself in his own eyes.*" And surely the proof is incontrovertible. For a man under the bondage of sin would never *flatter himself in his own eyes*, were it not that God is not before them. The reason why he thinks so well of himself is, that *God is not in all his thoughts.* He hath cast off all fear about himself because he hath no fear of God.—*John Jamieson.*

Verse 2.—"*He flattereth himself.*" 1. Some flatter themselves with a secret hope, that there is no such thing as *another world.* 2. Some flatter themselves that *death* is a great way off, and that they shall hereafter have much opportunity to seek salvation. 3. Some flatter themselves that they lead *moral* and orderly lives, and therefore think that they shall not be damned. 4. Some make the *advantages* under which they live an occasion of self-flattery. They flatter themselves that they live in a place where the gospel is powerfully preached, and among a religious people, where many have been converted; and they think it will be much easier for them to be saved on that account. 5. Some flatter themselves with their own *intentions.* They intend to give themselves liberty for a while longer, and *then* to reform. 6. There are some who flatter themselves that they *do*, and have *done*, a great deal for their salvation, and therefore hope they shall obtain it; when indeed they neither do what they ought to do, nor what they might do even in their present state of unregeneracy; nor are they in any likely way to be converted. 7. Some hope by their strivings to obtain salvation of *themselves.* They have a secret imagination that they shall, by degrees, work in themselves sorrow and repentance of sin, and love towards God and Jesus Christ. Their striving is not so much an earnest seeking to God, as a striving to do themselves that which is the work of God. 8. Some sinners flatter themselves that they are *already* converted. They sit down and rest in a false hope, persuading themselves that all their sins are pardoned; that God loves them; that they shall go to heaven when they die; and that they need trouble themselves no more. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. iii. 17.—*Condensed from Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 2.—"*In his own eyes.*" He had not God before his eyes in holy awe, therefore he puts himself there in unholy admiration. He who makes little of God makes much of himself. They who forget adoration fall into adulation. The eyes must see something, and if they admire not God, they will flatter self.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 2.—"*Until his iniquity be found to be hateful;*" that is, until he finds by experience that it is a more dreadful thing to sin against God, and break his holy commands, than he imagined.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 2.—"*Hateful.*" Odious to himself, to others, and to God.—*Gilbert Genebrard*, 1537—1597.

Verse 3.—"*He hath left off.*" That little light he once had, he hath lost, and cast off such good practices as once in hypocrisy he performed; neither will he learn to do better.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—Apostacy from God is really an undoing of all the good which we have done. 'Tis a wicked repentance quite contrary to the grace of repentance; as that is a repentance from dead works, so this is a repentance from works of a better sort: "*He hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*" 'Tis a perversion to evil after a seeming conversion from it.—*Timothy Cruso.*

Verses 3, 4 :—

Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more; and early rose,
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.
From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amid a group of gaping fools.
Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
His haunts; and, like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms
Of social joy and happiness decayed.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up. The prudent shunned him and his house
As one who had a deadly moral plague.

Robert Pollock, 1799—1827.

Verse 4.—"*He deviseth mischief upon his bed.*" As the man that feareth God communeth with his heart upon his bed, that he may not sin, no, not in his heart; so the man that feareth not God, deviseth how he may plot and perform sin willingly.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 4.—"*Upon his bed.*" Most diligently does Ayguan follow up the scriptural expressions concerning a bed, and tell us that there are six different beds of wickedness—that of luxury, that of avarice, of ambition, of greediness, of torpor, and of cruelty, and he illustrates them all by examples from Scripture.—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 4.—"*He setteth himself in a way that is not good.*" To wait to sin is to sin deliberately, yea, to wait to sin resolvedly. That sin is exceedingly sinfully committed which we set and prepare ourselves to commit. David, describing a wicked man, saith, "*He setteth himself in a way that is not good;*" that is, in an evil way: he doth not only fall into sin (that may be the case of a good man), but he takes or chooseth an evil way, and then sets or settles himself in it, resolving not to leave it, no, nor to be beaten out of it. Sin may be said to wait for a godly man, that is, Satan waits and watches his season to tempt him unto sin; but a godly man doth not wait nor watch to sin. It is bad enough to be overtaken with sin, or with a fault (as the apostle speaks, Gal. vi. 1); but to be taken with sin, and so to wait for a season to take our fill of it, is as bad as bad can be.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—"*He setteth himself in a way that is not good.*" Proud sinners have strongest conceit that they go right, at least in the way of their choice. Satan blindeth them so, that they mistake both the end and the way: in their count they are running to heaven, when they are posting to hell: he serveth them kindly with fresh post-horses. Sometimes he mounteth them on drunkenness, and when they have run a stage on that beastliness, he can mount them on lechery. Again, he can refresh them with avarice; and if they be weary of that slow jade, he setteth them on lofty ambition, and to make them more

spirity he can horse them on restless contention. Every one seeth not Satan's enquiry: there is no complexion or disposition, but he hath a fit horse for it, and that of itself. Every man's predominant is a beast of Satan's saddling and providing to carry men to hell. The way is one, the post-master is one, he is to be found at every stage, mounting his gallants, their horses are all of one kind though not of one colour. Happy is the man whom God dismounteth in that evil way, and more happy is he who taketh with that stay, and turneth his course to heaven.—*William Struther.*

Verse 4.—"*He abhorreth not,*" *i.e.*, is far enough from rejecting any instrument, however sinful, for attaining his purposes.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 5.—"*Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.*" David considering the thoughts and deeds of impious men, and the mercy of God towards them, utters this exclamation. When men sin so impudently, who does not admire the divine longsuffering!—*Sebastian Munster*, 1489—1552.

Verses 5—7.—This Psalm doth fitly set forth unto us the estate and condition of these times, wherein wickedness increaseth: and so in the former part of the Psalm is a discovery of wickedness, verse 3. And what should we do when there is such wickedness in the earth? In the fifth verse, "*Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*" God is gathering up all goodness, mercy, and peace from man to himself; and though there is cruelty, mischief, and wickedness in the world, in the earth, yet there is mercy, truth, and faithfulness in the clouds; and it's good that wisdom, goodness, truth, and righteousness leave the world, and cleave to God, that so we may follow it; and that what goodness, mercy, truth, and faithfulness we formerly enjoyed in man, we may enjoy it in God. And when wickedness increaseth, righteousness increaseth likewise: "*Thy righteousness is like the great mountains:*" when the world tears and breaks itself in pieces, then is the righteousness of God a great mountain. "*Thy judgments are a great deep;*" when the whole world is become one sea of confusion, then are the judgments of the Lord a great deep, where not only man, but beasts may rest safely. "*Thou preservest man and beast.*" And though this time is a time of growing and spreading wickedness in man, yet it is a time of sweetest admiration and love in God; and when men that sin do cry out, O woful man! they that enjoy God, cry out, O happy man! And though men that live in the earth cry out, O miserable! what times are here? men that live in heaven cry out, "*How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God!*" The Lord makes all things naked and bare, that we only may have him to be our safety.—*William Sedgwick* (1600—1668), *in* "*The Excellency of the love of God,*" *a sermon in a vol., entitled* "*Some Flashes of Lightnings of the Son of Man,*" 1648.

Verses 5—9:—

> Thy mercie Lord doth to the HEAUENS extend,
> Thy faithfullnes doth to the CLOUDES assend;
> Thy justice stedfast as a MOUNTAINE is,
> Thy JUDGEMENTS deepe as is the great Abisse;
> Thy noble mercies saue all liueinge thinges,
> The sonnes of men creepe underneath thy winges:
> With thy great plenty they are fedd at will,
> And of thy pleasure's streame they drinke their fill;
> For euen the well of life remaines with thee,
> And in thy glorious light wee light shall see.
>
> *Sir John Davies.*

Verse 6.—"*Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.*" Lit. *mountains of God*, which men have not planted, and which men cannot move.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6.—"*Thy judgments are a great deep.*" Men's sins are a great deep, and Satan's ways are called a depth; but God's judgments, his ways in the wheels, are the greatest deep of all, they are unsearchable.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 7.—"*How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God!*" etc. The expressions here which denote the abundance of divine blessings upon the righteous man, seem to be taken from the temple, from whence they were to issue. Under the covert of the temple, the wings of the cherubim, they were to be sheltered. The richness of the sacrifices, the streams of oil, wine, odours, etc., and the light of the golden candlestick, are all plainly referred to.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 7.—"*Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*" The word signifies to fly, to betake one's self to a place of safety: as the chickens in danger to be seized on, fly under the wings of the hen. "Under whose wings thou art come to trust." Ruth ii. 12. The helpless bird pursued by the kite, in danger to be devoured, runs under the shadow of the dam. Thus it is with a sinner at the first working of faith, he apprehends himself pursued by wrath and judgment; he knows if they seize on him he must perish without remedy. Oh, the sad condition of such a soul! Oh, but he sees Christ spreading his wings ready to secure perishing sinners; he hears him inviting in the gospel to come under his shadow! Oh, how sweet is that voice to him (however, while senseless he rejected it)! He hears, obeys, and runs to Christ for shelter, and so he is safe. "*How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*"—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 7.—"*Thy wings.*" A common figure in the Psalms, taken more immediately, in my opinion, from the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat which covered the ark; but more remotely from birds, which defend their young from the solar rays by overshadowing them with their wings.—*Francis Hare* (*Bishop*), 1740.

Verse 7:—

> In lonesome cell, guarded and strong I lie,
> Bound by Christ's love, his truth to testify,
> Though walls be thick, the door no hand unclose,
> God is my strength, my solace, and repose.

In a letter of Jeroninus Segerson, written in the prison at Antwerp to his wife, named Lysken, who likewise lay a prisoner there, 1551.

Verse 8.—"*They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.*" Mark, first, the excellency of the provision, "*fatness of thy house,*" the "*river of thy pleasures.*" The fattest is esteemed the fairest and the most excellent food; therefore the saint was enjoined to offer the fat in sacrifice under the law. As God expects the best from us, so he gives the best to us. This made David, when he had feasted so curiously, to sing so cheerfully. Fatness here is the top, the cream of all spiritual delicacies. "My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." Psalm lxiii. 5. But, though God keeps so noble a house to satisfy his people's hunger, what special care doth he take to quench their thirst! "*Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures.*" Oh, he drinks to them, and they pledge him in his own cup! Hath the child, then, any cause, when his Father keeps so rare and costly a table, to leave such dainties and go a-begging up and down the country for scraps and fragments? Oh, how much do these disgrace their Parent's provision, and their own discretion! But mark, reader, secondly, the plenty as well as the excellency of this provision. Here is fatness in the abstract, a "*river of pleasure;*" and so much as that they who enjoy it shall be *satisfied*, and *abundantly* satisfied. A river is overflowing and ever flowing; it communicates its water, and yet is never empty. It is fed with springs and fountains, and therefore it is no wonder if it always be full. They that are at such a well need not complain of want; but here are not only rivers and fatness, but of God's people it is said, "*they shall be abundantly satisfied.*" In the original it is *inebriated.* They shall have not only a sufficiency, but a redundancy of spiritual delights. The

vessels of their souls shall be filled to the brim out of that river whose streams make glad the city of God. Surely, then, they who may have bread in such abundance, enough and to spare, in their Father's house, made of the kidneys of the wheat, of the finest flour, need not hanker after the world's homely fare. Our heavenly Father doth not keep so starveling a house that the world's scraps should go down with us.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 8.—"*They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.*" I once heard a father tell, that when he removed his family to a new residence where the accommodation was much more ample, the substance much more rich and varied than that to which they had previously been accustomed, his youngest son, yet a lisping infant, ran round every room and scanned every article with ecstacy, calling out in childish wonder at every new sight, "Is this ours, father? and is this ours?" The child did not say "yours;" and I observed that the father while he told the story was not offended with the freedom. You could read in his glistening eye that the infant's confidence in appropriating as his own all that his father had, was an important element in his satisfaction.

Such, I suppose, will be the surprise, and joy, and appropriating confidence with which the child of our Father's family will count all his own when he is removed from the comparatively mean condition of things present, and enters the infinite things to come. When the glories of heaven burst upon his view, he does not stand at a distance like a stranger saying, O God, these are thine. He bounds forward to touch and taste every provision which those blessed mansions contain, exclaiming as he looks in the Father's face, Father, this and this is ours! The dear child is glad of all the father's riches, and the Father is gladder of his dear child.—*William Arnot.*

Verse 8.—"*The fatness of thy house.*" If there is an allusion to the temple, as Hupfield thinks, "*fatness*" would="fat sacrifices," and men would be regarded as the priests in the house, after the analogy of Jer. xxxi. 14.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 8.—"*The fatness of thy house.*" Fat was regarded among the Jews, as among all other nations of antiquity, as the richest part of animals, and therefore became synonymous with *the first, the best, the prime of anything.*—*Christian D. Ginsburg, LL.D., in Kitto's Cyclopedia.*

Verse 8.—"*Of thy house.*" This is emphatic, and means that which thou hast prepared for thine own household, thine own faithful domestics. Here is intended not the good things prepared for all men, but for the household retainers of God.—*John Piscator,* 1546—1626, *and D. H. Mollerus.*

Verse 8.—"*Pleasures.*" *Delights*, the same word as is translated "Eden" in Genesis, only it is here in the plural number.—*Dalman Hopstone, M.A.*

Verse 8.—And, saith one of the fathers, do you ask me what heaven is? Saith one, When I meet you there I will tell you. The world to come, say the Rabbins, is the world where all is well. I have read of one that would willingly swim through a sea of brimstone to get to heaven, for there, and only there, is perfection of happiness. What are the silks of Persia, the spices of Egypt, the gold of Ophir, and the treasures of both Indies, to the glory of another world? Augustine tells us that one day, when he was about to write something upon the eighth verse of the thirty-sixth Psalm, "*Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures,*" and being almost swallowed up with the contemplation of heavenly joys, one called unto him very loud by his name; and, enquiring who it was, he answered, I am Jerome, with whom in my lifetime thou hadst so much conference concerning doubts in Scripture, and am now best experienced to resolve thee of any doubts concerning the joys of heaven; but only let me first ask thee this question—Art thou able to put the whole earth, and all the waters of the sea, into a little pot? Canst thou measure the waters in thy fist, and mete out heaven with thy span, or weigh the mountains in scales, or the hills in a balance? If not, no more is it possible that thy understanding should comprehend the least of the joys of heaven; and certainly the least of the joys of heaven are inconceivable and unexpressible.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 9.—"*For with thee is the fountain of life.*"—These are some of the most wonderful words in the Old Testament. Their fulness of meaning no commentary can ever exhaust. They are, in fact, the kernel and the anticipation of much of the profoundest teaching of S. John.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 9.—"*In thy light shall we see light.*" The object and matter of our eternal happiness is called "*light.*" It will not be a dazzling and confounding light as was the brightness of Moses' face at his coming down from the mount; the people could not behold him: it will not be an astonishing light, as that in the mount at our Lord's transfiguration; the disciples fell to the ground, their weak eyes could not behold those glimpses of glory that shined through the vail of flesh. But the light in our heaven of happiness will be *a strengthening and comforting light;* it will strengthen and confirm the eyes of our understanding to behold it. Then shall we be enabled as the young eagles, to behold the Sun of Righteousness in his brightness and glory. It was said by the Lord to Moses, "None can see my face and live." Exodus xxxiii. 20. That glorious sight which Daniel saw took strength from him. Dan. x. 8. The object being without him, drew out all his spirits to behold and admire it and so weakened him; but in heaven our God, whom we shall see and know, will be within us to strengthen us; then shall we live because we see his face. It will be also a *comforting* light, like the light of the morning to the wearied watchman, who longed after it in the night-time.—*William Colville.*

Verse 9.—"*In thy light shall we see light.*" 'Tis but a kind of dim twilight comparatively, which we enjoy here in this world. While we are hid in this prison-house we can see but little; but our Father's house above is full of light: "*Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun,*" etc. Matt. xiii. 43. If the Day-star be risen in your hearts, live in the pleasant and cheerful expectation of perfect day. For we can ascend but a little way into the mysteries of the kingdom, as long as we are upon the footstool; and we shall know vastly and inconceivably more in the first moment after we come to heaven, than we are capable of attaining here throughout all our days.—*Timothy Cruso.*

Verse 9.—"*In thy light shall we see light.*" The light of nature is like a spark, the light of the gospel a lamp, the light of grace a star, but the light of glory the sun itself. The higher our ascent the greater our light; God dwelleth "in the light which no man can approach unto." 1 Tim. vi. 16—no man, while he carries mortality and sin about him; but when those two corrupt and uncapable qualities shall be put off, then shall we be brought to that light. We are now glad of the sun and stars over our heads, to give us light: what light and delight shall that be when these are under our feet! That light must needs go as far beyond their light as they now go beyond us. But alas! they are only able to discourse of that light, that do enjoy it, to whom that eternal day is risen; not we that live in the humble shade of mortality and natural dimness. I leave it therefore to your meditations: it is a glorious light which we do well often to consider, considering to admire, admiring to love, loving to desire, desiring to seek, and finding to enjoy for ever.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 9.—"*In thy light shall we see light.*" There is a great boast of light in the world, and there is some ground for it in natural things; but, as of old the world by wisdom knew not God, so of late. If ever we know God, it must be through the medium of his word. This I take to be the meaning of the passage. The term *light* in the last clause means the true knowledge of God; and, in the first, the true medium of attaining it, namely, divine revelation. The sum seems to amount to this: the word of God is the grand medium by which we can attain a true and saving knowledge of God. What the sun and stars are to the regions of matter, that revelation is to the mental region. Gen. i. 13, 17. . . .

There are many things of which you may entertain no doubt, concerning which there may be no manner of dispute; yet, make a point of seeing them in God's light. Many content themselves with seeing them in the light in which great and good men have placed them; but, though angels, they are

not the true light: they all view things partially. If what they say be true, yet, if we receive it merely on their representation, our faith will stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. 1 Cor. ii. 5. That knowledge or faith which has not God's word for its ground will not stand the day of trial.—*Andrew Fuller.*

Verse 9.—In this communion of God what can we want? Why, God shall be all and in all unto us; he shall be beauty for the eye, music for the ear, honey for the taste, the full content and satisfaction of our desires, and that immediately from himself. True it is God is all in all in this world, "In him we live, and move, and have our being;" but here he works by means of secondary causes; here he gives wine to make the heart glad, and oil, etc.; but there all intervening means between God and us is removed: "*with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light;*" not in the light of the sun, or the light of a candle; there is no need of them (Rev. xxii. 5); but "in *thy* light," the light of God himself; yea, the whole life of glory, together with all the concomitants of it, flows from him as the sole and original fountain of it. Oh, how sweet must that happiness be that is so derived!—*Edmund Pinchbeck, B.D., in "The Fountain of Life:" a Funeral Sermon*, 1652.

Verse 9.—Whatsoever can be found in the creature, even when God blesseth the use thereof to his own children, is but a drop from the ocean, is but a little water out of the well, in comparison of what a believer will see and feel to be in God reconciled through Christ, for, "*with thee is the fountain of life.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 10.—"*Continue thy lovingkindness.*" When God beginneth once to let out mercy to his servants, he stints not presently, but proceeds. . . . . When Rachel had her first son, she called his name Joseph, which signifieth adding, or increase; for she said, "The Lord shall add to me another son." Gen. xxx. 24. Now God hath begun to show kindness, he shall not only give me this, but he shall give me another son also. When the Lord hath bestowed one mercy on you, you may name it Joseph, increase, addition, for God will bestow another upon you. Abraham had many mercies from God, one after another; and Moses, a multitude of mercies; he converseth with God face to face; he heareth God speak; he hath God's presence to go along with him; yea, he seeth all God's goodness and glory to pass before him. When mercies come forth, God will not presently shut the door of mercy again. "*Continue thy lovingkindness.*" The Hebrew is, draw forth, or draw out thy lovingkindness: a metaphor either taken from vessels of wine, which being set abroach once, yield not only one cup, but many cups; so when God setteth abroach the wine of his mercy, he will not fill your cup once, but twice and seven times: or, taken from a mother, who hath her breasts full of milk, draws them out for her child, not once, but often; the child shall have the breast many times in the day, and many times in the night, so when God beginneth to show mercy to you, he will draw out his breasts of consolation, and will bestow mercy after mercy upon you; or, from a line which is extended, for so God being in a way of mercy, will extend the line of mercy, and measure out mercy after mercy for you.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 10.—The true mark of a godly man standeth in the conjunction of faith in God with sincere study of obedience to him, for, *He is the man that knoweth God*, and is upright in heart.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 11.—"*Foot*" . . . . . "*Hand.*" Both foot and hand are named because both used in waging war.—*Simeon de Muis.*

Verse 12.—"*There are the workers of iniquity fallen.*" This is said as if the psalmist pointed, when he said it, to a particular place with his finger; and the same mode of expression occurs in Psalm xiv. 5; or, it may be rendered, *then* (*i.e.*, when the just are satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house, being

rewarded for sincerely worshipping thee in it), *shall they fall, all that work wickedness; they shall be cast down, and shall not be able to rise*, as is the case with persons who have been thrown with violence upon the hard ground.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—What is the fear of God? How does it operate? What is the effect of its absence? What should we learn from seeing such evil results?

Or the atheism underlying transgression.

Verse 2.—The arts, motives, assistances, results, and punishments of self-flattery, and the discovery which concludes it.

Verse 2.—Self-flatteries.—*Jonathan Edwards' Sermon.*

Verse 2.—On the deceitfulness of the heart, with regard to the commission of sin. *Two Sermons, in Jamieson's "Sermons on the Heart."*

Verse 3.—Bad words. Two out of many kinds.

Verse 3 (*second clause*).—The relation between true wisdom and practical goodness.

Verse 4.—Diligence in doing evil, a mark of deep depravity.—*W. S. Plumer.*

Verse 4.—The abuse of retirement to wicked purposes, a sure characteristic of an habitual sinner.—*N. Marshall.*

Verse 4.—The sinner on his bed, in his conduct, in his heart; add to this, in his death, and in his doom.

Verse 4 (*second clause*).—Ways which are not good.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Neutrality condemned.

Verses 5, 6.—Four glorious similes of the mercy, faithfulness, and providence of God. The preacher has here a wealth of poetic imagery never surpassed.

Verse 6.—God's word and works mysterious.—*C. Simeon.*

Verse 6 (*second clause*).—God's judgments are—I. Often unfathomable—we cannot discover the foundation or cause, and spring of them. II. They are safe sailing. Ships never strike on rocks out in the great deeps. III. They conceal great treasure. IV. They work much good—the great deep, though ignorance thinks it to be all waste, a salt and barren wilderness, is one of the greatest blessings to this round world. V. They become a highway of communion with God. The sea is to-day the great highway of the world.

Verse 6 (*last clause*).—Kindness of God to the lower animals, as well as man.

Verses 7, 8.—Admiration! Confidence! Expectation! Realisation!

Verse 7.—The object, reasons, nature, and experience of faith.

Verse 8 (*first clause*).—*The provisions of the Lord's house.* What they are, their excellence and abundance, and for whom provided.

Verse 8 (*second clause*).—*The heavenly Hiddekel*—Its source, its flood, the happy drinkers, how they came to drink.

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—LIFE, natural, mental, spiritual, proceeds from God, is sustained, restored, purified, and perfected by him. In him it dwells with permanency, from him it flows freely, with freshness, abundance, and purity; to him it should be consecrated.

Verse 9 (*second clause*).—LIGHT, what it is to see it. *Divine* light, what it is; how it is the medium by which we see other light. The experience here described, and the duty here hinted at.

Verse 10.—I. *The character of the righteous*—he knows God, and is upright in heart. II. *His privilege*—lovingkindness and righteousness. III. *His prayer*, continue, etc.

Verse 10.—The need of daily supplies of grace.

Verse 12.—A view of the overthrow of evil powers, principles, and men.

PSALM XXXVII.

TITLE.—Of David.—*There is but this word to denote the authorship; whether it was a song or a meditation we are not told. It was written by David in his old age (verse 25), and is the more valuable as the record of so varied an experience.*

SUBJECT.—*The great riddle of the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous, which has perplexed so many, is here dealt with in the light of the future; and fretfulness and repining are most impressively forbidden. It is a Psalm in which the Lord hushes most sweetly the too common repinings of his people, and calms their minds as to his present dealings with his own chosen flock, and the wolves by whom they are surrounded. It contains eight great precepts, is twice illustrated by autobiographical statements, and abounds in remarkable contrasts.*

DIVISION.—*The Psalm can scarcely be divided into considerable sections. It resembles a chapter of the book of Proverbs, most of the verses being complete in themselves. It is an alphabetical Psalm: in somewhat broken order, the first letters of the verses follow the Hebrew alphabet. This may have been not only a poetical invention, but a help to memory. The reader is requested to read the Psalm through without comment before he turns to our exposition.*

EXPOSITION.

FRET not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

1. The Psalm opens with the first precept. It is alas! too common for believers in their hours of adversity to think themselves harshly dealt with when they see persons utterly destitute of religion and honesty, rejoicing in abundant prosperity. Much needed is the command, "*Fret not thyself because of evildoers.*" To fret is to worry, to have the heart-burn, to fume, to become vexed. Nature is very apt to kindle a fire of jealousy when it sees law-breakers riding on horses, and obedient subjects walking in the mire: it is a lesson learned only in the school of grace, when one comes to view the most paradoxical providences with the devout complacency of one who is sure that the Lord is righteous in all his acts. It seems hard to carnal judgments that the best meat should go to the dogs, while loving children pine for want of it. "*Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*" The same advice under another shape. When one is poor, despised, and in deep trial, our old Adam naturally becomes envious of the rich and great; and when we are conscious that we have been more righteous than they, the devil is sure to be at hand with blasphemous reasonings. Stormy weather may curdle even the cream of humanity. Evil men instead of being envied, are to be viewed with horror and aversion; yet their loaded tables, and gilded trappings, are too apt to fascinate our poor half-opened eyes. Who envies the fat bullock the ribbons and garlands which decorate him as he is led to the shambles? Yet the case is a parallel one; for ungodly rich men are but as beasts fattened for the slaughter.

2. "*For they shall soon be cut down like the grass.*" The scythe of death is sharpening. Green grows the grass, but quick comes the scythe. The destruction of the ungodly will be speedy, sudden, sure, overwhelming, irretrievable. The grass cannot resist or escape the mower. "*And wither as the green herb.*" The beauty of the herb dries up at once in the heat of the sun, and so all the glory of the wicked shall disappear at the hour of death. Death kills the ungodly man like grass, and wrath withers him like hay; he dies, and his

name rots. How complete an end is made of the man whose boasts had no end! Is it worth while to waste ourselves in fretting about the insect of an hour, an ephemera which in the same day is born and dies? Within believers there is a living and incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever; why should they envy mere flesh, and the glory of it, which are but as grass, and the flower thereof?

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; *so* shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

3. "*Trust in the Lord.*" Here is the second precept, and one appropriate to the occasion. Faith cures fretting. Sight is cross-eyed, and views things only as they seem, hence her envy: faith has clearer optics to behold things as they really are, hence her peace. "*And do good.*" True faith is actively obedient. Doing good is a fine remedy for fretting. There is a joy in holy activity which drives away the rust of discontent. "*So shalt thou dwell in the land.*" In "the land" which floweth with milk and honey; the Canaan of the covenant. Thou shalt not wander in the wilderness of murmuring, but abide in the promised land of content and rest. "We which have believed do enter into rest." Very much of our outward depends upon the inward: where there is heaven in the heart there will be heaven in the house. "*And verily thou shalt be fed,*" *or shepherded.* To integrity and faith necessaries are guaranteed. The good shepherd will exercise his pastoral care over all believers. In truth they shall be fed, and fed on truth. The promise of God shall be their perpetual banquet; they shall neither lack in spirituals nor in temporals. Some read this as an exhortation, "*Feed on truth;*" certainly this is good cheer, and banishes for ever the hungry heart-burnings of envy.

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

4. There is an ascent in this third precept. He who was first bidden not to fret, was then commanded actively to trust, and now is told with holy desire to delight in God. "*Delight thyself also in the Lord.*" Make Jehovah the joy and rejoicing of thy spirit. Bad men delight in carnal objects; do not envy them if they are allowed to take their fill in such vain idols; look thou to thy better delight, and fill thyself to the full with thy sublimer portion. In a certain sense imitate the wicked; they delight in their portion—take care to delight in yours, and so far from envying you will pity them. There is no room for fretting if we remember that God is ours, but there is every incentive to sacred enjoyment of the most elevated and ecstatic kind. Every name, attribute, word, or deed of Jehovah, should be delightful to us, and in meditating thereon our soul should be as glad as is the epicure who feeds delicately with a profound relish for his dainties. "*And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*" A pleasant duty is here rewarded with another pleasure. Men who delight in God desire or ask for nothing but what will please God; hence it is safe to give them *carte blanche.* Their will is subdued to God's will, and now they may have what they will. Our innermost desires are here meant, not our casual wishes; there are many things which nature might desire which grace would never permit us to ask for; these deep, prayerful, *asking* desires are those to which the promise is made.

5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

5. "*Commit thy way unto the Lord.*" Roll the whole burden of life upon the Lord. Leave with Jehovah not thy present fretfulness merely, but all thy cares; in fact, submit the whole tenor of thy way to him. Cast away anxiety,

resign thy will, submit thy judgment, leave all with the God of all. What a medicine is this for expelling envy! What a high attainment does this fourth precept indicate! How blessed must he be who lives every day in obedience to it! "*Trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*" Our destiny shall be joyfully accomplished if we confidently entrust all to our Lord. We may serenely sing—

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be;
O lead me by thine own right hand,
Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it matters not,
It leads me to thy rest.

I dare not choose my lot,
I would not if I might;
But choose Thou for me, O my God,
So shall I walk aright.

Take thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill;
As ever best to thee may seem,
Choose thou my good and ill."

The ploughman sows and harrows, and then leaves the harvest to God. What can he do else? He cannot cover the heavens with clouds, or command the rain, or bring forth the sun or create the dew. He does well to leave the whole matter with God; and so to all of us it is truest wisdom, having obediently trusted in God, to leave results in his hands, and expect a blessed issue.

6. "*And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.*" In the matter of personal reputation we may especially be content to be quiet, and leave our vindication with the Judge of all the earth. The more we fret in this case the worse for us. Our strength is to sit still. The Lord will clear the slandered. If we look to his honour, he will see to ours. It is wonderful how, when faith learns to endure calumny with composure, the filth does not defile her, but falls off like snow-balls from a wall of granite. Even in the worst cases, where a good name is for awhile darkened, Providence will send a clearing like the dawning light, which shall increase until the man once censured shall be universally admired. "*And thy judgment as the noonday.*" No shade of reproach shall remain. The man shall be in his meridian of splendour. The darkness of his sorrow and his ill-repute shall both flee away.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

7. "*Rest in the Lord.*" This fifth is a most divine precept, and requires much grace to carry it out. To hush the spirit, to be silent before the Lord, to wait in holy patience the time for clearing up the difficulties of Providence—that is what every gracious heart should aim at. "Aaron held his peace:" "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." A silent tongue in many cases not only shows a wise head, but a holy heart. "*And wait patiently for him.*" Time is nothing to him; let it be nothing to thee. God is worth waiting for. "He never is before his time, he never is too late." In a story we wait for the end to clear up the plot; we ought not to prejudge the great drama of life, but stay till the closing scene, and see to what a finis the whole arrives. "*Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*" There is no good, but much evil, in worrying your heart about the present success of graceless plotters: be not enticed into premature judgments—they dishonour God, they weary yourself. Determine, let the wicked succeed as they may, that you will treat the matter with indifference,

and never allow a question to be raised as to the righteousness and goodness of the Lord. What if wicked devices succeed and your own plans are defeated! there is more of the love of God in your defeats than in the successes of the wicked.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall* not *be:* yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall* not *be.*

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

8. "*Cease from anger and forsake wrath.*" Especially anger against the arrangements of Providence, and jealousies of the temporary pleasures of those who are so soon to be banished from all comfort. Anger anywhere is madness, here it is aggravated insanity. Yet since anger will try to keep us company, we must resolvedly forsake it. "*Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*" By no reasonings and under no circumstances be led into such a course. Fretfulness lies upon the verge of great sin. Many who have indulged a murmuring disposition have at last come to sin, in order to gain their fancied rights. Beware of carping at others, study to be yourself found in the right way; and as you would dread outward sin, tremble at inward repining.

9. "*For evil doers shall be cut off.*" Their death shall be a penal judgment; not a gentle removal to a better state, but an execution in which the axe of justice shall be used. "*But those that wait upon the Lord*"—those who in patient faith expect their portion in another life—"*they shall inherit the earth.*" Even in this life they have the most of real enjoyment, and in the ages to come theirs shall be the glory and the triumph. Passion, according to Bunyan's parable, has his good things first, and they are soon over; Patience has his good things last, and they last for ever.

10. "*For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.*" When bad men reach to greatness, the judgments of God frequently sweep them away; their riches melt, their power decays, their happiness turns to wretchedness; they themselves cease any longer to be numbered with the living. The shortness of life makes us see that the glitter of the wicked great is not true gold. O wherefore, tried believer, dost thou envy one who in a little while will lie lower than the dust? "*Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*" His house shall be empty, his chair of office vacant, his estate without an owner; he shall be utterly blotted out, perhaps cut off by his own debauchery, or brought to a deathbed of penury by his own extravagance. Gone like a passing cloud—forgotten as a dream—where are his boastings and hectorings, and where the pomp which made poor mortals think the sinner blest?

11. "*But the meek shall inherit the earth.*" Above all others they shall enjoy life. Even if they suffer, their consolations shall overtop their tribulations. By inheriting the land is meant obtaining covenant privileges and the salvation of God. Such as are truly humble shall take their lot with the rest of the heirs of grace, to whom all good things come by a sacred birthright. "*And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*" Peace they love and peace they shall have. If they find not abundance of gold, abundance of peace will serve their turn far better. Others find joy in strife, and thence arises their misery in due time, but peace leads on to peace, and the more a man loves it the more shall it come to him. In the halcyon period of the latter days, when universal peace shall make glad the earth, the full prophetic meaning of words like these will be made plain.

12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.

15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

Here is the portrait of a proud oppressor armed to the teeth.

12. "*The wicked plotteth against the just.*" Why can he not let the good man alone? Because there is enmity between the serpent's seed and the seed of the woman. Why not attack him fairly? Why plot and scheme? Because it is according to the serpent's nature to be very subtle. Plain sailing does not suit those who are on board of "The Apollyon." "*And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.*" The wicked show by their gestures what they would do if they could; if they cannot gnaw they will gnash; if they may not bite they will at least bark. This is precisely what the graceless world did with "that just One," the Prince of Peace. Yet he took no vengeance upon them, but like a silent lamb received injuries in patience.

13. "*The Lord shall laugh at him.*" The godly man needs not trouble himself, but leave well-deserved vengeance to be dealt out by the Lord, who will utterly deride the malice of the good man's enemies. Let the proud scorner gnash his teeth and foam at the mouth; he has one to deal with who will look down upon him and his ravings with serene contempt. "*For he seeth that his day is coming.*" The evil man does not see how close his destruction is upon his heels; he boasts of crushing others when the foot of justice is already uplifted to trample him as the mire of the streets. Sinners, in the hand of an angry God, and yet plotting against his children! Poor souls, thus to run upon the point of Jehovah's spear.

14. "*The wicked have drawn out the sword.*" They hold their weapon out of its sheath, and watch for a time to use it. "*And have bent their bow.*" One weapon is not enough, they carry another ready for action. They carry so strong a bow that they have trodden upon it to bend it—they will lose nothing for want of force or readiness. "*To cast down the poor and needy.*" These are their game, the objects of their accursed malice. These cowards attack not their equals, but seek out those excellent ones who, from the gentleness of their spirits and the poverty of their estates, are not able to defend themselves. Note how our meek and lowly Lord was beset by cruel foes, armed with all manner of weapons to slay him. "*And to slay such as be of upright conversation.*" Nothing short of the overthrow and death of the just will content the wicked. The sincere and straightforward are hated by the crafty schemers who delight in unrighteousness. See, then, the enemies of the godly doubly armed, and learn how true were our Lord's words, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

15. "*Their sword shall enter into their own heart.*" Like Haman they shall be hanged upon the gallows built by themselves for Mordecai. Hundreds of times has this been the case. Saul, who sought to slay David, fell on his own sword; and the bow, his favourite weapon, the use of which he taught the children of Israel, was not able to deliver him on Gilboa. "*And their bows shall be broken.*" Their inventions of evil shall be rendered useless. Malice outwits itself. It drinks the poisoned cup which it mixed for another, and burns itself in the fire which it kindled for its neighbour. Why need we fret at the prosperity of the wicked when they are so industriously ruining themselves while they fancy they are injuring the saints?

The next nine verses mainly describe the character and blessedness of the godly, and the light is brought out with a few black touches descriptive of the wicked and their doom.

16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken : but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright : and their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time : and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs : they shall consume ; into smoke shall they consume away.

21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again : but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

22 For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth ; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD : and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down : for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

16. "*A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.*" This is a fine proverb. The little of one good man is contrasted with the riches of many wicked, and so the expression is rendered the more forcible. There is more happiness in the godly dinner of herbs than in the stalled ox of profane rioters. In the original there is an allusion to the noise of a multitude, as if to hint at the turmoil and hurly-burly of riotous wealth, and to contrast it with the quiet of the humbler portion of the godly. We would sooner hunger with John than feast with Herod ; better feed on scant fare with the prophets in Obadiah's cave than riot with the priests of Baal. A man's happiness consists not in the heaps of gold which he has in store. Content finds *multum in parvo*, while for a wicked heart the whole world is too little.

17. "*For the arms of the wicked shall be broken.*" Their power to do mischief shall be effectually taken away, for the arms which they lifted up against God shall be crushed even to the bone. God often makes implacable men incapable men. What is a more contemptible sight than toothless malice, armless malevolence ! "*But the Lord upholdeth the righteous.*" Their cause and course shall be safe, for they are in good keeping. The sword of two edges smites the wicked and defends the just.

18. "*The Lord knoweth the days of the upright.*" His foreknowledge made him laugh at the proud, but in the case of the upright he sees a brighter future, and treats them as heirs of salvation. Ever is this our comfort, that all events are known to our God, and that nothing in our future can take him at unawares. No arrow can pierce us by accident, no dagger smite us by stealth ; neither in time nor in eternity can any unforeseen ill occur to us. Futurity shall be but a continual development of the good things which the Lord has laid up in store for us. "*And their inheritance shall be for ever.*" Their inheritance fades not away. It is entailed, so that none can deprive them of it, and preserved, so that none shall destroy it. Eternity is the peculiar attribute of the believer's portion : what they have on earth is safe enough, but what they shall have in heaven is theirs without end.

19. "*They shall not be ashamed in the evil time.*" Calamities will come, but deliverances will come also. As the righteous never reckoned upon immunity from trouble, they will not be disappointed when they are called to take their share of it, but the rather they will cast themselves anew upon their God, and prove again his faithfulness and love. God is not a friend in the sunshine only, he is a friend indeed and a friend in need. "*And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*" Their barrel of meal and cruse of oil shall last out the day of distress, and if ravens do not bring them bread and meat, the supply of their needs shall come in some other way, for their bread shall be given them. Our Lord stayed himself upon this when he hungered in the wilderness, and by faith he repelled the tempter; we too may be enabled not to fret ourselves in any wise to do evil by the same consideration. If God's providence is our inheritance, we need not worry about the price of wheat. Mildew, and smut, and bent, are all in the Lord's hands. Unbelief cannot save a single ear from being blasted, but faith, if it do not preserve the crop, can do what is better, namely, preserve our joy in the Lord.

20. "*But the wicked shall perish.*" Whatever phantom light may mock their present, their future is black with dark, substantial night. Judgment has been given against them, they are but reserved for execution. Let them flaunt their scarlet and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day; the sword of Damocles is above their heads, and if their wits were a little more awake, their mirth would turn to misery. "*The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs.*" As the sacrificial fat was all consumed upon the altar, so shall the ungodly utterly vanish from the place of their honour and pride. How can it be otherwise? If the stubble dares to contend with the flame, to what end can it hope to come? "*They shall consume.*" As dry wood, as heaps of leaves, as burning coals, they shall soon be gone, and gone altogether, for "*into smoke shall they consume away.*" *Sic transit gloria mundi.* A puff is the end of all their puffing. Their fuming ends in smoke. They made themselves fat, and perished in their own grease. Consumers of the good they tried to be, and consumed they shall be.

21. "*The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.*" Partly because he will not, but mainly because he cannot. Want follows upon waste, and debt remains undischarged. Often are the wicked thus impoverished in this life. Their wanton extravagance brings them down to the usurer's door and to the bankrupt's suit. "*But the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*" Mercy has given to him, and therefore he gives in mercy. He is generous and prosperous. He is not a borrower, but a giver. So far as the good man can do it, he lends an ear to the requests of need, and instead of being impoverished by what he imparts, he grows richer, and is able to do more. He does not give to encourage idleness, but in real mercy, which supposes real need. The text suggests to us how much better it generally is to give than to lend. Generally, lending comes to giving in the end, and it is as well to anticipate the fact, and by a little liberality forestall the inevitable. If these two sentences describe the wicked and the righteous, the writer of these lines has reason to know that in and about the city of London the wicked are very numerous.

22. "*For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth.*" God's benediction is true wealth after all. True happiness, such as the covenant secures to all the chosen of heaven, lies wrapped up in the divine favour. "*And they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.*" His frown is death; nay, more, 'tis hell.

23. "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.*" All his course of life is graciously ordained, and in lovingkindness all is fixed, settled, and maintained. No reckless fate, no fickle chance rules us; our every step is the subject of divine decree. "*He delighteth in his way.*" As parents are pleased with the tottering footsteps of their babes. All that concerns a saint is interesting to his heavenly Father. God loves to view the holy strivings of a soul pressing forward to the skies. In the trials and the joys of the faithful, Jesus has fellowship with them, and delights to be their sympathising companion.

24. "*Though he fall.*" Disasters and reverses may lay him low; he may,

like Job, be stripped of everything ; like Joseph, be put in prison ; like Jonah, be cast into the deep. "*He shall not be utterly cast down.*" He shall not be altogether prostrate. He shall be brought on his knees, but not on his face ; or, if laid prone for a moment, he shall be up again ere long. No saint shall fall finally or fatally. Sorrow may bring us to the earth, and death may bring us to the grave, but lower we cannot sink, and out of the lowest of all we shall arise to the highest of all. "*For the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*" Condescendingly, with his own hand, God upholds his saints ; he does not leave them to mere delegated agency, he affords personal assistance. Even in our falls the Lord gives a measure of sustaining. Where grace does not keep from going down, it shall save from keeping down. Job had double wealth at last, Joseph reigned over Egypt, Jonah was safely landed. It is not that the saints are strong, or wise, or meritorious, that therefore they rise after every fall, but because God is their helper, and therefore none can prevail against them.

25 I have been young, and *now* am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth ; and his seed *is* blessed.

25. This was David's observation, "*I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*" It is not *my* observation just as it stands, for I have relieved the children of undoubtedly good men, who have appealed to me as common mendicants. But this does not cast a doubt upon the observation of David. He lived under a dispensation more outward, and more of this world than the present rule of personal faith. Never are the righteous forsaken ; that is a rule without exception. Seldom indeed do their seed beg bread ; and although it does occasionally occur, through dissipation, idleness, or some other causes on the part of their sons, yet doubtless it is so rare a thing that there are many alive who never saw it. Go into the union house and see how few are the children of godly parents ; enter the gaol and see how much rarer still is the case. Poor ministers' sons often become rich. I am not old, but I have seen families of the poor godly become rich, and have seen the Lord reward the faithfulness of the father in the success of the son, so that I have often thought that the best way to endow one's seed with wealth is to become poor for Christ's sake. In the Indian mission of the "Baptist Missionary Society," this is abundantly illustrated.

26. "*He is ever merciful, and lendeth.*" The righteous are constantly under generous impulses ; they do not prosper through parsimony, but through bounty. Like the bounteous giver of all good, of whom they are the beloved sons, they delight in doing good. How stingy covetous professors can hope for salvation is a marvel to those who read such verses as this in the Bible. "*And his seed is blessed.*" God pays back with interest in the next generation. Where the children of the righteous are not godly, there must be some reason for it in parental neglect, or *some* other guilty cause. The friend of the father is the friend of the family. The God of Abraham is the God of Isaac and of Jacob.

27 Depart from evil, and do good ; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints ; they are preserved for ever : but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

Here we have the seventh precept, which takes a negative and positive form, and is the quintessence of the entire Psalm.

27. "*Depart from evil, and do good.*" We must not envy the doers of evil, but depart altogether from their spirit and example. As Lot left Sodom without casting a look behind, so must we leave sin. No truce or parley is to

be held with sin, we must turn away from it without hesitation, and set ourselves practically to work in the opposite direction. He who neglects to do good will soon fall into evil. "*And dwell for evermore.*" Obtain an abiding and quiet inheritance. Shortlived are the gains and pleasures of evil, but eternal are the rewards of grace.

28. "*For the Lord loveth judgment.*" The awarding of honour to whom honour is due is God's delight, especially when the upright man has been traduced by his fellow men. It must be a divine pleasure to right wrongs, and to defeat the machinations of the unjust. The great Arbiter of human destinies is sure to deal out righteous measure both to rich and poor, to good and evil, for such judgment is his delight. "*And forsaketh not his saints.*" This would not be right, and, therefore, shall never be done. God is as faithful to the objects of his love as he is just towards all mankind. "*They are preserved for ever.*" By covenant engagements their security is fixed, and by suretyship fulfilments that safety is accomplished; come what may, the saints are preserved in Christ Jesus, and because he lives, they shall live also. A king will not lose his jewels, nor will Jehovah lose his people. As the manna in the golden pot, which else had melted, was preserved in the ark of the covenant beneath the mercy-seat, so shall the faithful be preserved in the covenant by the power of Jesus their propitiation. "*But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*" Like the house of Jeroboam and Ahab, of which not a dog was left. Honour and wealth ill-gotten seldom reach the third generation; the curse grows ripe before many years have passed, and falls upon the evil house. Among the legacies of wicked men the surest entail is a judgment on their family.

29. "*The righteous shall inherit the land.*" As heirs with Jesus Christ, the Canaan above, which is the antitype of "the land," shall be theirs with all covenant blessing. "*And dwell therein for ever.*" Tenures differ, but none can match the holding which believers have of heaven. Paradise is theirs for ever by inheritance, and they shall live for ever to enjoy it. Who would not be a saint on such terms? Who would fret concerning the fleeting treasures of the godless?

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

30. "*The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom.*" Where the whole Psalm is dedicated to a description of the different fates of the just and the wicked, it was meet to give a test by which they could be known. A man's tongue is no ill index of his character. The mouth betrays the heart. Good men, as a rule, speak that which is to edifying, sound speech, religious conversation, consistent with the divine illumination which they have received. Righteousness is wisdom in action, hence all good men are practically wise men, and well may the speech be wise. "*His tongue talketh of judgment.*" He advocates justice, gives an honest verdict on things and men, and he foretells that God's judgments will come upon the wicked, as in the former days. His talk is neither foolish nor ribald, neither vapid nor profane. Our conversation is of far more consequence than some men imagine.

31. "*The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*" The best thing in the best place, producing the best results. Well might the man's talk be so admirable when his heart was so well stored. To love holiness, to have the motives and desires sanctified, to be in one's inmost nature obedient to the Lord—this is the surest method of making the whole run of our life efficient for its great ends, and even for securing the details of it, our *steps*

from any serious mistake. To keep the even tenor of one's way, in such times as these, is given only to those whose hearts are sound towards God, who can, as in the text, call God their God. Policy slips and trips, it twists and tacks, and after all is worsted in the long run, but sincerity plods on its plain pathway and reaches the goal.

32. "*The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.*" If it were not for the laws of the land, we should soon see a massacre of the righteous. Jesus was watched by his enemies, who were thirsting for his blood: his disciples must not look for favour where their Master found hatred and death.

33. "*The Lord will not leave him in his hand.*" God often appears to deliver his servants, and when he does not do so in this life as to their bodies, he gives their souls such joy and peace that they triumphantly rise beyond their tormentors' power. We may be in the enemy's hand for awhile, as Job was, but we cannot be left there. "*Nor condemn him when he is judged.*" Time shall reverse the verdict of haste, or else eternity shall clear away the condemnation of time. In due season just men will be justified. Temporary injustices are tolerated, in the order of Providence, for purposes most wise; but the bitter shall not always be called sweet, nor light for ever be traduced as darkness; the right shall appear in due season; the fictitious and pretentious shall be unmasked, and the real and true shall be revealed. If we have done faithfully, we may appeal from the petty sessions of society to the solemn assize of the great day.

34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that* man *is* peace.

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD; *he is* their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

34. "*Wait on the Lord.*" We have here the eighth precept, and it is a lofty eminence to attain to. Tarry the Lord's leisure. Wait in obedience as a servant, in hope as an heir, in expectation as a believer. This little word "wait" is easy to say, but hard to carry out, yet faith must do it. "*And keep his way.*" Continue in the narrow path; let no haste for riches or ease cause unholy action. Let your motto be, "On, on, on." Never flag, or dream of turning aside. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." "*And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.*" Thou shalt have all of earthly good which is really good, and of heavenly good there shall be no stint. Exaltation shall be the lot of the excellent. "*When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*" A sight how terrible and how instructive! What a rebuke for fretfulness! what an incentive to gratitude! My soul, be still, as thou foreseest the end, the awful end of the Lord's enemies.

35. A second time David turns to his diary, and this time in poetic imagery tells us of what he had observed. It were well if we too took notes of divine providences. "*I have seen the wicked in great power.*" The man was terrible to others, ruling with much authority, and carrying things with a high hand, a Cæsar in might, a Crœsus in wealth. "*And spreading himself like a green bay tree.*" Adding house to house and field to field, rising higher and higher in the

state. He seemed to be ever verdant like a laurel, he grew as a tree in its own native soil, from which it had never been transplanted. No particular tree is here meant, a spreading beech or a wide expanding oak may serve us to realise the picture ; it is a thing of earth, whose roots are in the clay ; its honours are fading leaves ; and though its shadow dwarfs the plants which are condemned to pine beneath it, yet it is itself a dying thing as the feller's axe shall prove. In the noble tree, which claims to be king of the forest, behold the grandeur of the ungodly to-day ; wait awhile and wonder at the change, as the timber is carried away, and the very root torn from the ground.

36. "*Yet he passed away.*" Tree and man both gone, the son of man as surely as the child of the forest. What clean sweeps death makes ! "*And, lo, he was not.*" To the surprise of all men the great man was gone, his estates sold, his business bankrupt, his house alienated, his name forgotten, and all in a few months. "*Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*" Moved by curiosity, if we enquire for the ungodly, they have left no trace ; like birds of ill omen none desire to remember them. Some of the humblest of the godly are immortalised, their names are imperishably fragrant in the church, while of the ablest of infidels and blasphemers hardly their names are remembered beyond a few years. Men who were in everybody's mouths but yesterday are forgotten to-morrow, for only virtue is immortal.

37. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.*" After having watched with surprise the downfall of the wicked, give your attention to the sincerely godly man, and observe the blessed contrast. Good men are men of mark, and are worth our study. Upright men are marvels of grace, and worth beholding. "*For the end of that man is peace.*" The man of peace has an end of peace. Peace without end comes in the end to the man of God. His way may be rough, but it leads home. With believers it may rain in the morning, thunder at midday, and pour in torrents in the afternoon, but it must clear up ere the sun goes down. War may last till our last hour, but then we shall hear the last of it.

38. "*But the transgressors shall be destroyed together.*" A common ruin awaits those who joined in common rebellion. "*The end of the wicked shall be cut off.*" Their time shall be shortened, their happiness shall be ended, their hopes for ever blasted, their execution hastened on. Their present is shortened by their sins ; they shall not live out half their days. They have no future worth having, while the righteous count their future as their true heritage.

39. "*But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.*" Sound doctrine this. The very marrow of the gospel of free grace. By salvation is meant deliverance of every kind ; not only *the* salvation which finally lands us in glory, but all the minor rescues of the way ; these are all to be ascribed unto the Lord, and to him alone. Let him have glory from those to whom he grants salvation. "*He is their strength in the time of trouble.*" While trouble overthrows the wicked, it only drives the righteous to their strong Helper, who rejoices to uphold them.

40. "*And the Lord shall help them.*" In all future time Jehovah will stand up for his chosen. Our Great Ally will bring up his forces in the heat of the battle. "*He shall deliver them from the wicked.*" As he rescued Daniel from the lions, so will he preserve his beloved from their enemies ; they need not therefore fret, nor be discouraged. "*And save them, because they trust in him.*" Faith shall ensure the safety of the elect. It is the mark of the sheep by which they shall be separated from the goats. Not their merit, but their believing, shall distinguish them. Who would not try the walk of faith ? Whoever truly believes in God will be no longer fretful against the apparent irregularities of this present life, but will rest assured that what is mysterious is nevertheless just, and what seems hard, is, beyond a doubt, ordered in mercy. So the Psalm ends with a note which is the death-knell of the unhallowed disquietude with which the Psalm commenced. Happy they who can thus sing themselves out of ill frames into gracious conditions.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—The righteous are preserved in Christ with a special preservation, and in a peculiar safety. In the thirty-seventh Psalm this point is excellently and at large handled, both by direct proof, and by answer to all the usual objections against their safety. That they shall be preserved is affirmed, verses 3, 17, 23, 25, 32. The objections answered are many.

Objection 1.—Wicked men flourish.

Solution.—A righteous man should never grieve at that, for "they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." Verse 2.

Object. 2.—Righteous men are in distress.

Sol.—*Verse* 6.—The night of their adversity will be turned into the light of prosperity; and as surely as they can believe when it is night that it shall be day, so surely may they be persuaded when crosses are upon them, that comfort and deliverance shall come.

Object. 3.—But there are great plots laid against the righteous, and they are pursued with great malice, and their intended ruin is come almost to the very issue.

Sol.—*Verses* 12—15.—The Lord sees all the plots of wicked men, and laughs at their spiteful and foolish malice; while they are busy to destroy the righteous, and hope to have a day against them, "The Lord seeth that their own day is coming upon them, even a day of destruction, a day of great judgment and eternal misery;" their bow shall be broken, and the sword that they have drawn shall enter into their own heart.

Object. 4.—But the just have but small means.

Sol.—*Verses* 16, 17.—"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous."

Object. 5.—Heavy times are like to befall them.

Sol.—*Verse* 19.—"They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall have enough."

Object. 6.—But the wicked wax fatter and fatter, and they prevail in vexing the righteous.

Sol.—*Verse* 20.—Indeed the wicked are fat, but it is but "the fat of lambs," their prosperity shall soon melt; and as they be like smoke in vexing the godly, so shall they be like smoke in vanishing away.

Object. 7.—But the righteous do fall.

Sol.—*Verse* 24.—Though he do fall, yet he falls not finally, nor totally, for he "is not utterly cast down;" and besides, there is an upholding providence of God in all the falls of the righteous.

Object. 8.—We see some wicked men that do not so fall into adversity, but rather are in prosperity to their dying days.

Sol.—*Verse* 28.—Though they do, yet "their seed shall be cut off."

Object. 9.—But some wicked men are strong yet, and in their seed spread also.

Sol.—*Verses* 35, 36.—Note also that these "spreading bay-trees" many times "soon pass away;" and they and their houses are sometimes "utterly cut off."

Object. 10.—But upright men are under many and long crosses.

Sol.—*Verse* 37.—Yet "his end is peace."

Object. 11.—But nobody stands for the godly when they come into question.

Sol.—*Verses* 39, 40.—"Their salvation is of the Lord;" he is their strength, he will help them and deliver them, etc.

But if we would be thus delivered, observe: 1. That we must not unthankfully fret at God's providence (verse 1). 2. We must "trust in the Lord and do good" (verse 3). 3. We must "delight ourselves in the Lord," and not place our contentment on earthly things (verse 4). 4. We must "commit our ways to God" (verse 5). 5. We must get patience and humble affections

(verses 7—11). 6. We must be of upright conversation (verse 14). 7. We must be merciful (verses 25, 26). 8. We must "speak righteous things," and get "the law into our hearts" (verses 30, 31). 9. We must "keep our way," and "wait on God," and not use ill means.—*Nicholas Byfield.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm may well be styled, The good man's cordial in bad times; a sovereign plaister for the plague of discontent; or, a choice antidote against the poison of impatience.—*Nathaniel Hardy, in a Funeral Sermon*, 1649.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm very much reminds one in its construction of the sententious and pithy conciseness of the Book of Proverbs. It does not contain any prayer, nor any direct allusion to David's own circumstances of persecution or distress. It is rather the utterance of sound practical wisdom and godliness from the lips of experience and age, such as we might suppose an elder of the church, or a father of a family, to let fall as he sat with his household gathered around him, and listening to his earnest and affectionate admonition.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Whole Psalm.—The present Psalm is one of the alphabetical Psalms, it is called "*Providentiæ speculum*," by Tertullian; "*Potio contra murmur*," by Isidore; "*Vestis piorum*," by Luther.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1.—"*Fret*," or, inflame not, burn not thyself with anger or grief.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 1.—"*Neither be thou envious*," etc. Queen Elizabeth envied the milkmaid when she was in prison; but if she had known what a glorious reign she should have had afterwards for forty-four years, she would not have envied her. And as little needeth a godly man, though in misery, to envy a wicked man in the ruff of all his prosperity and jollity, considering what he hath in hand, much more what he hath in hope.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—Would it not be accounted folly in a man that is heir to many thousands per annum that he should envy a stage-player, clothed in the habit of a king, and yet not heir to one foot of land? who, though he have the form, respect, and apparel of a king or nobleman, yet he is, at the same time, a very beggar, and worth nothing? Thus, wicked men, though they are arrayed gorgeously, and fare deliciously, wanting nothing, and having more than heart can wish, yet they are but only possessors: the godly Christian is the heir. What good doth all their prosperity do them? It does but hasten their ruin, not their reward. The ox that is the labouring ox is the longer lived than the ox that is put into the pasture; the very putting of him there doth but hasten his slaughter; and when God puts the wicked men into fat pastures, into places of honour and power, it is but to hasten their ruin. Let no man, therefore, fret himself because of evil doers, nor be envious at the prosperity of the wicked; for the candle of the wicked shall be put into everlasting darkness; they shall soon be cut off, and wither as a green herb.—*Ludovic de Carbone, quoted by John Spencer.*

Verse 2.—"*Cut down like the grass*," with a scythe, and even at one blow.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 2.—"*Wither.*" O bitter word, which will make the ears of them that hear it to tingle! O sentence intolerable, which depriveth sinners of all good things, and bringeth them to all woe! The Lord sometime accursed the fig tree, and immediately, not only the leaves, but also the body and root were wholly withered: even so, that fearful curse of the last day shall be no less effectual; for on whomsoever it falleth it shall so scorch them, and shall so make them destitute of God's grace, that they shall never more be able to do, to speak, think, or to hope for any good thing.—*Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 2.—"*Green herb.*" We cannot gather riper fruit of patience from any tree than is found upon the low shrubs of man's short life; for if that fretting canker of *envy at the prosperity of the wicked* have overrun thy mind, a malady

from which the saints have no shelter to be freed, out of this apothecary's shop take antidote ; either thy time is short to behold it, or theirs shorter to enjoy it ; "they are set in slippery places, and are suddenly destroyed," Psalm lxxiii. 18 ; "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave," Job xxi. 13 ; "*They shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*"—*Edmund Layfield's Sermon, entitled "The Mappe of Man's Mortality and Vanity,"* 1630.

Verse 2.—Sometimes the wicked, like the green herb, wither in their spring, they fall in their rise, they perish in the beginnings of their mischievous designs ; but if they do come to a full growth, they grow but to harvest, the fit season of their cutting off.—*Robert Mossom.*

Verse 3.—Note well the double precept "*trust*" and "*do.*" This is the true order, the two must go together, the one produces, the other proves ; the promise is to both.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 3.—"*So shalt thou dwell in the land,*" etc. Thou shalt have a settlement, a quiet settlement, and a maintenance, a comfortable maintenance : "*Verily thou shalt be fed ;*" some read it, Thou shalt be fed by faith, as the just are said to live by faith, and it is good living, good feeding upon the promises. "*Verily thou shalt be fed,*" as Elijah in the famine, with what is needful for thee. God himself is a shepherd, a feeder to all those that trust in him, Psalm xxiii. 1.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 3.—"*So shalt thou dwell in the land,*" etc. The land of Canaan was considered as the sum of earthly, and the type of heavenly felicity : to be provided for in the Lord's land, and there to dwell under his protection, near his ordinances, and among his people, was all that the genuine Israelite could desire.—*Thomas Scott* (1747—1821) *in loc.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou shalt be fed.*" A manner of speech taken from cattle feeding securely, under the conduct and keeping of a good shepherd.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou shalt be fed.*" Fed in plenty.—*Thomas Secker (Archbishop)*, 1768.

Verse 3.—Fed in security.—*John Parkhurst.*

Verse 4.—Note thy part and God's part. Do thou "*delight,*" and he will "*give.*"—*C. H. S.*

Verse 4.—How much grace and love breathes in these words, "*Delight thyself also in the Lord!*" *Trust* in him was recommended before, and now, this being added also, how plain is it that your ease and rest is the thing designed ! Is it fit to receive so much kindness with neglect ? Again, *he delights in you ;* I speak to such of whom this may be supposed. And it is indefinitely said, "His delights were with the sons of men," Prov. viii. 31. Think what he is, and what you are ; and at once, both wonder and yield. And what else have you to delight in ? what thing will you name that shall supply the place of GOD, or be to you in the stead of him ? Moreover, who should delight in him but you—his friends, his sons, those of his own house ? Think what life and vigour it will infuse into you, and that "the joy of the Lord will be your strength," Nehem. viii. 10. How pleasantly will you hold on your course, and discharge all the other duties of this your present state ! You must serve him. Dare you think of throwing off his yoke ? How desirable is it then to take delight in him whom I must serve ; which only makes that service acceptable to him, and easy to myself ! Further, this is a pleasure none can rob you of ; a joy that cannot be taken from you. Other objects of your delight are vanishing daily. Neither men nor devils can ever hinder you delighting in God, if your hearts be so inclined. And were you never brought to take pleasure in any person or thing to which you had a former aversion ? One that had wronged you might yet possibly win you by after kindness. Give a reason why you should be more difficult towards the blessed God that never

wronged you, and whose way towards you hath constantly imported so much good will!

And consider that your condition on earth is such as exposes you to many sufferings and hardships, which, by your not delighting in him, you can never be sure to avoid (for they are things common to men), but which, by your delighting in him, you may be easily able to endure. Besides all this, seriously consider that you must die. You can make no shift to avoid that. How easily tolerable and pleasant will it be to think, then, of going to him with whom you have lived in a delightful communion before! And how dreadful to appear before him to whom your own heart shall accuse you to have been (against all his importunities and allurements) a disaffected stranger!—*John Howe's "Treatise of Delight in God."*

Verse 4.—We have in the former part extended the meaning of the words "*Delight thyself in the Lord*," beyond what they seem at first sight literally to signify; so as not to understand them merely as requiring that very single act of *delight* to be immediately and directly terminated on God himself; but to take them as comprehending all *the sum of all holy and religious converse with God, i.e.*, as it is delightful, or as it is seasoned (intermingled, and as it were besprinkled) with delight; and upon the same account, of all our other converse, so far as it is influenced by religion. And I doubt not, to such as shall attentively have considered what hath been said, it will be thought very reasonable to take them in that latitude; whereof the very letter of the text (as may be alleged for further justification hereof) is most fitly capable. For the particle which we read *in* the Lord, hath not that signification alone, but signifies also *with*, or *by*, or *besides*, or *before*, or *in presence of*, as if it had been said, "Come and sit down with God, retire thyself to him, and solace thyself in the delights which are to be found in his presence and converse, in walking with him, and transacting thy course as before him, and in his sight." As a man may be said to delight himself with a friend that puts himself under his roof, and, besides personal converse with himself, freely enjoys the pleasure of all the entertainments, accommodations, and provisions which he is freely willing to communicate with him, and hath the satisfaction which a sober person would take in observing the rules and order of a well-governed house.—*John Howe.*

Verse 4.—"*He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*" It shall be unto thee even as thou wilt. It is said of Luther that he could have what he would of Almighty God. What may not a favourite, who hath the royalty of his prince's care, obtain of him?—*John Trapp.*

Verse 4.—"*The desires of thine heart*" All the desires of this spiritual seed are of the nature of this seed, namely, substantial, and shall meet with substance. All the desires of natural man, even after God, after Christ, after righteousness, shall burn and perish with him (for they are not the truth, nor do they come from the truth, nor can they reach to the truth;) but all the desires of this spirit shall live with the Spirit of God, in rest and satisfaction for ever.—*John Pennington*, 1656.

Verse 4.—The *desires* of God, and the *desires* of the righteous, agree in one; they are of one mind in their desires.—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 5.—"*Commit thy way unto the Lord*," etc. When we bear the burden of our own affairs ourselves, and are chastised with anxiety and want of success, and with envying the ungodly who prosper better than we do, the best remedy is first to do our duty, as we are enabled in the use of the means, then cast the care of the success over on God, as the ploughman doth when he hath harrowed his land; and let the burden of it rest on God, and let us not take it off him again, but put our mind to rest, resolved to take the harvest in good part, as he shall send it.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—"*Commit thy way unto the Lord*," is rendered by the Vulgate, *Revela viam Domino*, reveal thy way; and by St. Ambrose, understood of

revealing our sins to God. Indeed, since it is impossible to cover, why should we not discover, our sins? Conceal not that which God knoweth already, and would have thee to make known. It is a very ill office to be the devil's secretary. Oh, break thy league with Satan by revealing his secrets, thy sins, to God.—*Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 5.—"*Commit thy way unto.*" Marg. and Heb., *Roll thy way upon*—as one who lays upon the shoulder of one stronger than himself a burden which he is not able to bear.—*William De Burgh, D.D., in "A Commentary on the Book of Psalms. Dublin:* 1860."

Verse 5.—Note the double again, "*Commit*" and "*trust.*"—*C. H. S.*

Verse 5.—"*He shall bring it to pass.*" When a hard piece of work is put into the hand of an apprentice for the first assay of his skill, the beholders are justly afraid of a miscarriage in his young and inexperienced hand; but when the worker is an old master of craft, none are afraid but his cunning hand can act again what so oft it hath wrought to the contentment of all the beholders. Were our God a novice in the great art of governing the world, and of the church in the bosom thereof; had he to this day never given any proof of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in turning about the most terrible accidents to the welfare and joy of his saints; we might indeed be amazed whenever we feel ourselves sinking in the dangers wherein the practices of our enemies oft do plunge us over head and ears; but the Lord having given in times past so many documents of his uncontroverted skill and most certain will to bring about all human affairs, as to his own glory, so to the real good of all that love him, it would be in us an impious and unexcusable uncharitableness to suspect the end of any work which he hath begun.—*Robert Baylie's Sermon before the House of Commons,* 1643.

Verses 5, 7 :—

To God thy way commending,
  Trust him whose arm of might,
The heavenly circles bending,
  Guides every star aright;
The winds, and clouds, and lightning,
  By his sure hand are led;
And he will dark shades brightening,
  Show thee what path to tread.

* * * * *

Although to make God falter,
  The powers of hell combine,
One jot they cannot alter
  Of his all-wise design:
All projects and volition
  Of his eternal mind,
Despite all opposition,
  Their due fulfilment find.

No more, then, droop and languish,
  Thou sorrow-stricken soul;
E'en from the depths of anguish,
  Whose billows o'er thee roll,
Thy Father's hand shall draw thee:
  In hope and patience stay,
And joy will soon shed o'er thee
  An ever brightening ray.

All faithless murmurs leaving,
  Bid them a last good night,
No more thy vexed soul grieving,
  Because things seem not right;
Wisely his sceptre wielding,
  God sits in regal state,
No power to mortals yielding,
  Events to regulate.

Trust with a faith untiring
In thine Omniscient King,
And thou shalt see admiring
What he to light will bring.
Of all thy griefs, the reason
Shall at the last appear:
Why now denied a season,
Will shine in letters clear.

* * * * *

Then raise thine eyes to heaven,
Thou who canst trust his frown;
Thence shall thy meed be given,
The chaplet and the crown:
Thy God the palm victorious
In thy right hand shall plant,
Whilst thou, in accents glorious,
Melodious hymns shall chant.

* * * * *

Paul Gerhard (1606—1676), *translated by Frances Elizabeth Cox, in "Hymns from the German,"* 1864.

Verse 6.—"*He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,*" etc. If thou shouldst be accused as a man of evil designs, let not that trouble thee neither: for though thy fame may be obscured for a time by calumnies and slanders, as the sun is by mists and clouds, yet as that scatters them all at last, so shall thy integrity appear, and shine as bright as the sun at noonday.—*Symon Patrick.*

Verse 7.—"*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.*" There are two words in the original, which express the privilege and the duty of resting on Christ: one implies such a state of acquiescence, as silences the clamours of conscience, and composes the perturbation of the spirit; the other signifies the refreshment and repose of a weary pilgrim, when he arrives at the end of his journey, and is settled for life in a secure, commodious, plentiful habitation.—*James Hervey.*

Verse 7.—"*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.*" Take the case of one who, with a load above his strength, has been toiling some steep and broken path, when suddenly he finds it lifted off and transferred to another whose strength he knows to be more than equal to the task, and in whose sympathy he can securely trust. What would his feeling be but one of perfect rest, and calm reliance, and joyous freedom, as they went on their way together? And such is the blessedness of rolling our care upon the Lord—in weakness we are resting on superior strength, in perplexity and doubt we are resting on superior wisdom, in all times of trial and hard service we can stay ourselves on the assurance of his perfect sympathy. The literal meaning of the word "*rest,*" is "*be silent*" towards the Lord. With the eye fixed on him let all unbelieving thoughts be stilled, such thoughts as rise and rankle in the querulous spirit when it sees only its troubles, and not God in them, when the mists of earth hide from its sight the eternal stars of heaven. Then like Jacob, it may say morosely, "All these things are against me;" or, like Elijah, despondently, "It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life;" or, like Jonah, fretfully, "I do well to be angry." In regard to all such dark and unbelieving suggestions, the heart is to keep silence, to be still and know that he is God; silent as to murmuring, but not silent as to prayer, for in that holy meditative stillness the heart turns to commune with him. What is "resting in God," but the instinctive movement and upward glance of the spirit to him; the confiding all one's griefs and fears to him, and feeling strengthened, patient, hopeful in the act of doing so! It implies a willingness that he should choose for us, a conviction that the ordering of all that concerns us is safer in his hands than in our own.

A few practical remarks:—1. Our "*resting patiently*" in the Lord applies only to the trials which he sends, not to the troubles which even Christians often make for themselves. There is a difference in the burdens that come in

the way of duty, and those that come through our wandering into other ways. We can roll the one upon the Lord, but with the other our punishment may be to be left to bear them long, and to be bruised in bearing them. 2. The duty here enjoined is to be carried through all our life. We all admit that *patient* waiting is needed for the great trials of life, but may not acknowledge so readily that it is needed as much for little, daily, commonplace vexations. But these are as much a test of Christian principle as the other. 3. This resting in God is a criterion of a man's spiritual state. It needs a special faculty of discernment, a new sense to be opened in the soul, before our fallen nature can understand or desire it.—*James D. Burns, M.A.*

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—"*Hold thee still*" (so it may be translated). And this is the hardest precept that is given to man ; insomuch that the most difficult precept of action sinks into nothing when compared with this command to inaction.—*Jerome.*

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—The Hebrew word rendered *silent* is דֹּם, *dom*, from which the English word *dumb* appears to be derived. The silence here enjoined is opposed to murmuring or complaining.—*James Anderson, in Calvin's Commentary.*

Verse 7.—Note again the twin duties, "*rest*" and "*wait.*"

Verse 7.—"*Bringeth wicked devices to pass.*" Observe the opposition between this and *God's* bringing to pass, in verse five. The ground for grief is that the ungodly appear to achieve their end, the reason for comfort is that our end shall be achieved also, and that in the best manner by God himself.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 8.—"*Forsake wrath ;*" which is anger wrought up to a greater degree ; and the rather to be shunned and avoided, as being very disagreeable to the character of a good man. "*Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil ;*" evil may be done by fretting at the prosperity of wicked men, or by imitating them, doing as they do, in hope of being prosperous as they are.—*John Gill.*

Verse 9.—"*They shall inherit the earth.*" He means that they shall live in such a manner as that the blessing of God shall follow them, even to the grave.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 10.—"*Thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*" To wit, because he shall be grubbed up by the roots.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 10.—"*His place . . shall not be.*" The very land he occupied as a home, and the title to which was unimpeachable, is no longer "*his place.*" It has passed into other hands. Nothing of all he had on earth is his. He is as poor as the most miserable object that subsisted on alms.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 10.—The peacock, a glorious fowl, when he beholds that comely fan and circle which he maketh of the beautiful feathers of his tail, he rejoiceth, he setteth, and beholdeth every part thereof : but when he looketh on his feet, which he perceiveth to be black and foul, he by-and-by, with great misliking, vaileth his top-gallant, and seemeth to sorrow. In like manner, a great many know by experience, that when they see themselves to abound in riches and honours, they glory and are deeply conceited of themselves ; they praise their fortune, and admire themselves ; they make plots, and appoint much for themselves to perform in many years to come. This year, they say, we will bear this office, and the next year that ; afterward we shall have the rule of such a province ; then we will build a palace in such a city, whereunto we will adjoin such gardens of pleasure, and such vineyards : and thus they make a very large reckoning aforehand, who if they did but once behold their feet, if they did but think upon the shortness of their life, so transitory and unconstant ; how soon would they let fall their proud feathers, forsake their arrogancy, and change their purpose, their minds, their lives, and their manners.—*Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 11.—"*The meek shall inherit the earth.*" In the meantime, they, and they only, possess the present earth, as they go toward the kingdom of heaven, by being humble, and cheerful, and content with what their good God has allotted them. They have no turbulent, repining, vexatious thoughts that they deserve better; nor are vexed when they see others possessed of more honour, or more riches, than their wise God has allotted for their share. But they possess what they have with a meek and contented quietness; such a quietness as makes their very dreams pleasing, both to God and themselves.—*Izaak Walton* (1593—1683), *in* "*The Complete Angler.*"

Verse 11.—"*The meek.*" What is thy Beloved more than any other beloved? It is spoken to the spouse. So what is meekness more than any other virtues? We may say, here is *synecdoche speciei*, one particular taken for the general, one virtue for all the rest. Or the effect is put for the cause; because meekness is one of the principal and chiefest parts of holiness. But if you will give me leave to conjecture, the Holy Ghost may seem in this promise at once to show the condition of the church, and to comfort her; and because being laid hard at on every side, she stands in need of this virtue more than any other, to fit and fashion the reward to the virtue, to cherish and exalt it in us with the promise of something beyond our expectation, even the *inheritance of the earth.* And indeed what fitter reward can there be of meekness? What more fit and just than that they who have been made the anvil for injuries to beat on, who have been *viri perpessitii*, as Seneca speaks of Socrates, men of great sufferance, who have suffered not only their goods to be torn from them by oppression and wrong, but their reputations to be wounded with the sharp razor of detraction, and have withstood the shock of all *spectantibus similes*, with the patience of a looker on, should be raised and comforted with a promise of that which their meekness gave up to the spoil; and that by the providence of God which loves to thwart the practice of the world, they should be made heirs even of those possessions which the hand of violence hath snatched from them.—*Anthony Farindon, B.D.*, 1596—1658.

Verse 11.—Not the hot stirring spirits who bustle for the world shall have it, but the meek, who are thrust up and down from corner to corner, and hardly suffered to remain anywhere quietly in it. This earth, which they seem most deprived of, they only shall have and enjoy. When the Lord hath made it worth the having, then none shall have it but they. "*They shall inherit the earth.*" The earth is the Lord's; these are the children of the Lord, and they shall inherit this earth. When the Lord taketh it into his own possession and enjoyment, they shall succeed him in the possession and enjoyment of it. It is their right, and shall descend unto them by right, by inheritance. It is the Lord's right, and by the Lord shall descend to them as their right. They cannot yet have it, for the Lord hath it not yet; but when the Lord hath it, it shall fairly descend to them. This accursed earth they shall never have, but when it is taken into the hands of the Lord, and blessed by the Lord, then it shall be theirs, then it shall be inherited by the children of blessing.—*John Pennington.*

Verse 11.—"*And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*" Surely when the glory of the Lord covers the earth, and all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Prince of Peace, and the wicked one is rooted out, we may well expect peace in rich abundance.—*W. Wilson.*

Verses 12, 13.—Note how the gesture of the wicked in *gnashing their teeth* is returned to them in the Lord's scornful *laughter* at their devices. Their plotting, too, is countermined by that winding up of all plots, which the Lord knoweth, though they are wilfully ignorant of it.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 13.—"*The Lord shall laugh at him,*" etc. He seems to provide very coldly for our consolation under sorrow, for he represents God as merely *laughing.* But if God values highly our salvation, why does he not set himself to resist the fury of our enemies, and vigorously oppose them? We know that

this, as has been said in Psalm ii. 4, is a proper trial of our patience when God does not come forth at once, armed for the discomfiture of the ungodly, but connives for a time, and withholds his hand. Lest the flesh should still murmur and complain, demanding why God should only laugh at the wicked, and not rather take vengeance upon them, the reason is added, that he sees the day of their destruction at hand. "*For he seeth that his day is coming.*"—*John Calvin.*

Verse 13.—"*For he seeth that his day is coming:*" He laughs at such poor worms, who make themselves so great upon the earth, and act so loftily in their impotence, seeing it must so soon be over with them.—*Berlib. Bible, quoted by E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 13.—"*For he seeth that his day is coming.*" His dismal day, his death's day, which will also be his doom's day.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 14, 15.—The tongue is a "*sword*" and a "*bow,*" which shooteth its arrows, even bitter words, against the humble and upright, Jesus and his disciples. But these are not the only weapons that have been drawn against them. How the malice of the Jews returned upon their own heads no one is ignorant, though few lay it to heart, and consider them as set forth for an example.—*George Horne.*

Verses 14, 15.—When the wicked are most near to do a mischief to the Lord's people, then is a mischief most near unto them.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 16.—"*A little that a righteous man hath,*" etc. To wit, 1. Because the wicked do often enrich themselves by unjust means, and so have much vexation and trouble with them, and likewise thereby do treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; whereas the righteous with a little, well gotten, have much peace of conscience, with hope of heaven hereafter. 2. Because the righteous use theirs well, and are the better for them; whereas the wicked abuse theirs many ways, and are in many respects the worse for them. 3. Because the righteous enjoy what they have from hand to mouth as the gifts of God, and the pledges of his fatherly love and care over them, and so it is to them as manna from heaven, and hereby they enjoy much sweet comfort, and are fully satisfied with what they have; whereas the wicked have none of this joy nor satisfaction by their wealth. 4. Because God by his blessing doth usually make that the righteous enjoy to be more effectual for their good than is the abundance of the wicked. A little coarse fare makes them more healthful and strong than the wicked are with all their plenty. And, 5. Because the wicked enjoyeth not his wealth long, as the righteous man doth; and this indeed agrees best with the following words.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 16.—Strangers to Christ have the use of outward mercies, but cannot be properly said to have the enjoyment; they seem to be masters of them, but indeed they are servants to them; possessors as to outward use, but slaves as to their inward affections; they serve them while they seem to dispose of them; they do not *dominari*, but *servire*—have not the command of, but are enslaved. Nor is their use truly comfortable; they may fancy comfort, but their comfort is but a fancy; it flows from another fountain than can be digged in earth; true, solid comfort is the portion of those only who have the righteousness of Christ for their portion. These may look upon every temporal enjoyment as a token of everlasting love, as a pledge and earnest of eternal glory; and both these, because they may receive them as the purchase of the blood and righteousness of Christ; ay, here is the well-spring of comfort, the fountain of that comfort which is better than life. Oh, what comfort is it to taste the sweetness of Christ's love in every enjoyment! When we can say, "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, that I might enjoy these blessings," oh, how will this raise the value of every common mercy! Christ's righteousness which was performed, the highest expression of his love, purchased this for me! Upon this account is that of the psalmist true, "*A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.*" He that hath but food and raiment hath

in this respect more than he that hath the Turkish empire, or the gold of the Indies. He hath more ground of comfort in his little than they in all.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 16.—If thine estate were but little, yet it would be perfumed with love, and that lump of sugar in thy cup would make the liquor sweet, be it never so small. As the waters which flow from the hills of some of the islands of Molucca taste of the cinnamon and cloves which grow there, so should thy gift, though it were but water, taste of the goodwill and special grace of the Giver. Thy "*little*," with the fear of the Lord, would be "*better than the riches of many wicked men.*" As a little ring with a very costly diamond in it is far more worth than many great ones without it, so thy estate, though it were but a penny, should be joined with the precious jewel of that love which is better than life, and enjoyed by special promise, and thereby be infinitely more worth than the thousands and millions of others bestowed merely from common bounty, and enjoyed only by a general providence.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 16.—'Tis as possible for a wicked man to fill his body with air and his chest with grace, as his mind with wealth. 'Tis with them as with a ship; it may be overladen with silver and gold, even unto sinking, and yet have compass and sides to hold ten times more. So here, a covetous wretch, though he have enough to sink him, yet he shall never have enough to satisfy him. So that the conclusion which the psalmist delivers is most worthy to be observed: "*A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked;*" he doth not say of how many, because let us think of never so many, yea, of all of them, the righteous man's little is better in very many respects than all their greatest treasures heaped together. The King of Spain although the greatest prince in Christendom by far, having his empire so far extended, that he may truly say, that the sun ever shines upon his dominions, yet gives this for his motto, *Totus non sufficit orbis*, The whole world is not sufficient. God by Solomon tells us that "In the house of the righteous is much treasure" (Prov. xv. 6), although many times there is scarce a good bed to lie, or a seat to sit on. The time will certainly come, when the richest wicked men that ever lived will see clearly that their account would have been much narrower, and consequently their condition to all eternity less miserable, if they had been so poor as to have begged their bread from door to door all their lives long. 'Tis with the blessings of this life as 'tis with perfumed gloves; when they are richly perfumed their perfume is much more valuable than the leather of which they are made: so, not so much earthly blessings considered in themselves, as their being perfumed with the sweet love of God in Christ, is that which maketh them blessings indeed, truly deserving the name they bear. Now all the blessings of those who have made Mary's choice are all thus perfumed; all the barley bread they eat, be it never so coarse; all the clothes they wear, be they never so mean; with all their other temporal blessings, they proceed from the same sweet love of God, wherewith he was moved to bestow Jesus Christ upon them for salvation. Rom. viii. 32.—*John Glascock's Sermon, entitled "Mary's Choice,"* 1659.

Verses 16, 17.—A little blest is better than a great deal curst; a little blest is better than a world enjoyed; a pound blest is better than a thousand curst; a black crust blest is better than a feast curst; the gleanings blest are better than the whole harvest curst; a drop of mercy blest is better than a sea of mercy curst; Lazarus' crumbs blest was better than Dives' delicates curst; Jacob's little blest unto him was better than Esau's great estate that was curst unto him. 'Tis always better to have scraps with a blessing, than to have manna and quails with a curse; a thin table with a blessing is always better than a full table with a snare; a threadbare coat with a blessing is better than a purple robe curst; a hole, a cave, a den, a barn, a chimney-corner with a blessing, is better than stately palaces with a curse; a woollen cap blest is better than a golden crown curst; and it may be that emperor understood as much, that said of his crown, when he looked on it with tears: "If you knew the

cares that are under this crown you would never stoop to take it up." And therefore, why should not a Christian be contented with a little, seeing his little shall be blest unto him? Isaac tills the ground and sows his seed, and God blesses him with an hundredfold; and Cain tills the ground and sows his seed, but the earth is cursed to him and commanded not to yield to him his strength. Oh, therefore never let a Christian murmur because he hath but little, but rather let him be still a-blessing of that God that hath blest his little, and doth bless his little, and that will bless his little to him.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 17.—"*For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but he upholdeth* (or underprops) *the righteous.*" By "*the arms of the wicked,*" you are to understand their strength, their valour, their power, their wit, their wealth, their abundance, which is all the arms they have to support and bear up themselves in the world with. Now, these arms shall be broken, and when they are broken, then, even then, will God uphold the righteous, that is, God will be a continual overflowing fountain of good to his righteous ones; so that they shall never want, though all the springs of the wicked are dried up round about them.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 18.—"*The Lord knoweth the days of the upright.*" Depositeth their days, lays them up in safety for them: for such is the original idea of יָדַע:—*John Fry.*

Verse 18.—"*The Lord knoweth the days of the upright,*" and they cannot be cut short by the malice of man.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 20.—"*As the fat of lambs.*" As the glory of fat sheep, which are at length slain.—*Targum.*

Verse 20.—"*Fat of lambs.*" As the fat of the sacrifices was consumed on the altar by the fire (which was a type of God's righteous vengeance upon sinners), till it vanished into smoke; so the wicked will be the sacrifices to God's justice, and be destroyed by the fire of his indignation.—*Thomas Scott.*

Verse 20.—"*Into smoke shall they consume.*" "What hath pride profited us? or what hath our boasting of riches given us?" Such are the things, they shall speak who are in hell and who have sinned. For, the hope of the ungodly is like a dry thistle-down, by the wind carried away, or the thin foam spread upon the billows, or as a smoke floated hither and thither by the wind, or as the remembrance of a wayfaring man for a day.—*Wouter of Stoelwÿk*, 1541.

Verse 21—"*Payeth not again;*" *i.e.*, has it not in his power, from his straitened circumstances, to repay what he has borrowed: comp. Deut. xxviii. 12. A Jew thus circumstanced became the bond-slave of his creditors: comp. 2 Kings iv. 1.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 22.—God promiseth that the seed of his people shall inherit the earth. The child of such a tenant as paid his rent well, shall not be put out of his farm.—*John Glascock.*

Verse 23.—"*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.*" When this Pilot undertakes to steer their course, their vessel shall never split upon the rock, run upon the sands, or spring a leak, so as to sink in the seas. To be sure he will see them safe in their harbour. He was no Christian, yet I suppose none will deny but he spake good divinity, who said, "If a man will choose God for his Friend, he shall travel securely through a wilderness that hath many beasts of prey in it; he shall pass safely through this world; for he only is safe that hath God for his guide." (Ar. Epist. xxvii.) Doth he not speak a little like David himself (Psalm xxxvii. 23), who never expected to come to glory except he were guided by his counsel? Now, if a poor heathen could say thus, and see good reason to trust God, and admire his faithfulness as he

doth frequently (and so doth Seneca, justifying God's faithfulness in all his dealings with the best men in all their sufferings, and the prosperity of the wicked); what then shall the heavenly Christian say, who hath experienced so much of God's faithfulness in answering his prayers, in fulfilling his promises, and supplying all his exigencies?—*James Janeway.*

Verse 23.—"*He delighteth in his way.*" Note that in verse four, we are bidden to delight in the Lord, and here he delights in us, and as here our way is his delight, so in verse thirty-four we are to "keep *his* way." These antitheses are instructive.—*C. H. S.*

Verses 23, 24.—Strange words to us! the very "*steps*" all "*ordered*," and that by an Almighty One, who "delights" in the goodness of the good man's way. And yet the inference so distinctly to be drawn is that the good man *may* fall, and that his God and Guide may stand by and behold and permit!

Let us add to the suggestion of these verses, one or two references which may help us to establish the principle in our hearts, that the child of God may fall and still remain the child of God; and also to explain somewhat of the reason why this is part of their lot, whether ordered, or only permitted, at all events, a step of the "right way," by which God leads them to a "city of habitation." Psalm cvii. 7.

It is observed near the close of Hezekiah's good and prosperous life that, "in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon. . . . God left him *to try him*, that he might know all that was in his heart." 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. And again, in Daniel's prophecy regarding the latter days, we find (Daniel xi. 35), "And some of them of understanding shall fall, *to try them*, and *to purge*, and *to make them white.*" In the two preceding verses, we have also some valuable details regarding such falls, such as the help with which God will uphold them, the flatteries with which the world will still beset, and hinder them from rising again; the outward troubles into which their fall shall lead them, as through a furnace; the high position (instructors of many) which yet shall not save them from their needed ordeal—the time appointed—and the end in view. So here. The acknowledgment of the possibility of the good man's fall is accompanied with the precious assurance that "*he shall not be utterly cast down.*"—*Mary B. M. Duncan, in "Under the Shadow*, 1867."

Verse 24.—"*Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down*," etc. Thus the Spirit comforts and answers the secret thoughts which everyone might have, saying with himself, I have, however, seen it happen, that the righteous is oppressed, and his cause is trodden in the dust by the wicked. Nay, he replies, dear child, let it be so, that he falls; he still cannot remain lying thus and be cast away; he must be up again, although all the world doubts of it. For God catches him by the hand, and raises him again.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 24.—"*Though he fall*," namely, as one that were faint-hearted, "*he shall not be cast off*," namely, utterly, or for ever from God (2 Cor. iv. 9); "*for the Lord putteth under his hand*," *i.e.*, his power and might, namely, to uphold him from utter falling away, which we should quickly do if God were not with us.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 24.—A man pardoned, and justified by faith in Christ, though he may, and sometimes doth, fall into foul sins, yet they never prevail so far as to reverse pardon, and reduce to a state of non-justification. "*Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand!*" He speaks of a good man pardoned, justified; he may fall; but how far? from pardon, from justification? No, then he should utterly fall, be cast down beneath God's hand; but the text saith, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand; or, as Montanus renders the words, the Lord upholdeth his hands, and he will not let him sink into such a condition. If it were so, then sin should have dominion over him, but, Rom. vi. 14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you;" and chap. viii. 2, justified ones are freed from the law of sin and death; and verse 30, the predestinated, called, justified,

and glorified ones, are so linked together, that there is no breaking their chain; if they do sin, they have an "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 1, 2.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 25.—"*I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken*" (he doth not say, In my experience I never saw the righteous afflicted, but, I never saw him left or forsaken in his affliction), "*and I never saw his seed begging their bread:*" he puts in that, because begging of bread, especially in the commonwealth of Israel, and in the state of the Jews, was a note of utter dereliction! for though God had told them that they should have the poor always with them, yet he had given an express law that there should be no beggar among them; therefore, saith he, I have not seen the righteous so forsaken, that they should be forced to live by begging. If any say, that David himself begged, he asked bread of Abimelech and of Nabal; I answer, it is a good rule, and it resolves the case; transitory cases, and sudden accidents, make no beggars: we must not say, David was a beggar, or begged his bread, because once he was in a strait and asked bread of Abimelech; and in a second strait sent to Nabal: in such sudden cases, the richest man in the world may be put to ask a piece of bread. A good man may fall into such wants, but good men are rarely, if ever or at all, left in them.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 25.—"*Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*" Perhaps it will be objected that there have been many righteous men poor: but the place speaketh of a righteous charitable man, for so the following verse showeth, which saith, "He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed." And who hath seen such a one or his seed to be brought to such poverty as to beg his bread? When our Saviour Christ had fed four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes, all being filled, seven baskets full of fragments were gathered up: and it is Saint Austin's note upon it, *crescit dum impenditur victus, sic eleemosyna si indigentibus erogetur*, the victuals in expending were augmented, and so is the alms which is given to the poor.—*Michael Jermin.*

Verse 25.—"*Yet have I not seen,*" etc. I believe this to be literally true in all cases. I am now grey-headed myself; I have travelled in different countries, and have had many opportunities of seeing and conversing with religious people in all situations in life; and I have not, to my knowledge, seen one instance to the contrary. I have seen no *righteous man forsaken*, nor any *children* of the righteous *begging their bread*. God puts honour upon all that fear him; and thus careful is he of *them*, and of their *posterity.*—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 25.—"*Begging bread.*" This is not meant of an occasional seeking relief in want (for so David himself desired bread of Abimelech, 1 Samuel xxi. 3, and he and his soldiers desired some supply of victuals from Nabal, ch. xxv. 8): but of living in a continual way of begging from door to door, which is denounced as a curse against the wicked (Psalm cix. 10), "Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg." Nor doth it hence follow, that neither the righteous man, nor his seed, are ever brought to this sad degree of misery; but only that it doth so rarely happen, that David in all his time had never seen it.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 25.—This observation of the psalmist will be found generally verified. We find indeed exceptions, as in the case of Eli's family. But this was the result of his defect of character as a righteous man. And we know that the promises must fail, if they neglect the means necessary to their accomplishment (see Genesis xviii. 19). But some think that this verse admits of an explanatory supplement; and render the last clause thus, "Nor his seed (forsaken, though) begging bread."—*David Davidson, in "The Pocket Commentary*, 1836."

Verse 25.—These words must be taken as a general observation, not absolutely verified in every case; yet the strict fact is, I apprehend, that the

immediate descendants of truly pious persons are very seldom, if ever, reduced to such extremities, unless by their own great imprudence, or their abandoned practices.—*William Walford.*

Verse 25.—Here he recordeth an experiment of his (such as whereof Psalm cxix. is mostly made up), and if other men's experiences agree not altogether with his, it is no wonder: kings use not to mind beggars.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 25, 26.—Many persons are solicitously perplexed how their children shall do when they are dead; yet they consider not, how God provided for them when they were children. Is the Lord's arm shortened? Did he take thee from thy mother's breasts; and when thy parents forsook thee (as the psalmist saith), became thy Father? And cannot this experienced mercy to thee, persuade thee that he will not forsake thine? Is not "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever?" "I have been young," saith David, "and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken," that is granted, nay, "nor his seed begging bread."

Many distrustful fathers are so carking for their posterity, that while they live they starve their bodies, and hazard their souls, to leave them rich. To such a father it is said justly, *Dives es hæredi, pauper inopsque tibi.* Like an over-kind hen, he feeds his chickens, and famisheth himself. If usury, circumvention, oppression, extortion, can make them rich, they shall not be poor. Their folly is ridiculous; they fear lest their children should be miserable, yet take the only course to make them miserable; for they leave them not so much heirs to their goods as to their evils. They do as certainly inherit their fathers' sins as their lands: "God layeth up his iniquity for his children: and his offspring shall want a morsel of bread." Job xxi. 19.

On the contrary, the good man "*is merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*" What the worldling thinks shall make his posterity poor, God saith shall make the good man's rich. The precept gives a promise of mercy to obedience, not confined to the obedient man's self, but extended to his seed, and that even to a thousand generations, Exodus xx. 6. Trust, then, Christ with thy children; when thy friends shall fail, usury bear no date, oppression be condemned to hell, thyself rotten to the dust, the world itself turned and burned into cinders, still "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 26.—"*He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*" He, the good man, is "*merciful*" to *himself*, for mercy, like charity, begins at home; he is not afraid to eat a good meal because he hath children. And he is merciful to *others* too; for he will lend and do good to whom he can, and then his seed fares the better for it. Mark, that the more he gives and lends in doing works of mercy, the better it is for his children; for those children are ever best provided for whose parents bear this mind—they had rather trust God with their children, than their children with riches; and have made this their hope, that though they die, yet God lives. Did but one of those rich and wretched parents (who pinched and pined himself to make his son a gentleman, forsooth), rise from the dead, and see that proverb of Solomon fulfilled in himself, "He begetteth a son, and in his hand is nothing;" I persuade myself, the rumination of this would afflict him in his soul as much as any one pain of sense, even in hell itself. O consider this, you that now live and see it in others; and remember withal, that if your goods be either ill-gotten, or worse kept, it may be your children's case when you are departed, and feel it, though you see it not.—*Matthew Griffith.*

Verse 28.—"*For the Lord . . . . forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.*" How? since they die as others do. Mark the *antithesis*, and that will explain it. "*They are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*" They are preserved in their posterity: children are but the parents multiplied, and the parents continued; 'tis *nodosa æternitas;* when the

father's life is run out to the last, there is a knot tied, and the line is still continued by the child. I confess temporal blessings, such as long life, and the promise of an happy posterity, are more visible in the eye of that dispensation of the covenant; but yet God still taketh care for the children of his people, and many promises run that way that belong to the gospel administration, and still God's service is the surest way to establish a family, as sin is the ready way to root it out. And if it doth not always fall out accordingly, yet for the most part it doth; and we are no competent judges of God's dispensations in this kind, because we see providence by pieces, and have not the skill to set them together; but at the day of judgment, when the whole contexture of God's dealings is laid before us, we shall clearly understand how *the children of his servants continue, and their seed is established.* Psalm cii. 28.— *Thomas Manton.*

Verse 29.—"*The righteous shall inherit the land,*" or the earth. There is clearly an emphasis in the repetition of the same promise in the same terms which ought to have been uniformly rendered throughout verses 9, 11, 22, 29, 34. And it cannot be doubted, that there is a reference to the new heavens and the new earth of Isaiah lxvi. 17; 2 Peter iii. 13.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 29.—"*The righteous shall inherit the land,*" etc. Comp. Matt. v. 5. Consider well this Bible truth, of the future exclusive possession of the earth by the righteous. The millennial kingdom furnishes a fuller explanation.—*T. C. Barth.*

Verse 31.—"*The law of his God is in his heart,*" etc. The flock of sheep that's indisposed and unwilling to drive, start out of the way into every lane's end, one this way and another that; and just so is it with an unwilling heart; one thought starts this way, and another that, and it's a piece of skill to drive them through. But a willing heart, a heart prepared and ready to every good work, it flies quite up an end, and delights itself in the Lord.—*Richard Steele.*

Verse 31 (*first clause*).—He hath a Bible in his head, and another in his heart; he hath a good treasure within, and there hence bringeth good things.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 32, 33.—The Jews "*watched*" that Just One daily and hourly; they "*sought to slay him,*" and did so; but *Jehovah left him not in their hands,* but vindicated his innocence by raising him from the dead.—*George Horne.*

Verse 34.—"*Wait on the Lord,*" etc. He that truly trusts in God will stay God's time, and use God's means, and walk in God's way, though it seem round about; they will not neglect their souls for haste; they know this would be to make more haste than good speed. Nor would they step out of the way, the way that is holy and righteous, though they may escape a loss, an affliction by it, though they might gain some desirable advantage by it. True faith goes leaning upon God, and therefore will "*keep his way.*" He that will not be liberal for the promoting and honouring of the gospel; he that fears poverty or affliction more than he fears sin; he that is more careful for the things of the world than for his soul; he that takes indirect or suspected courses, to get, or increase, or secure his estate; he that is not jealous or watchful, lest his cares for the world (when he is much engaged therein) should be immoderate—it is plain he doth not trust God with his estate; and he that does not trust God for his estate, whatever he think or pretend, he does not trust God for his soul, for his salvation; his hopes of heaven and salvation are but presumption.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 34.—"*Wait on the Lord.*" Bind him not to a day, wake not the Beloved till he please.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 34.—"*Wait . . . . keep.*" While we are waiting let us take heed of wavering. Go not a step out of God's way, though a lion be in the way; avoid not duty to meet with safety; keep God's highway, the good old way

(Jer. vi. 16), the way which is paved with holiness. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Isaiah xxxv. 8. Avoid crooked paths, take heed of turning to the left hand, lest you be set on the left hand. Sin doth cross our hopes, it barricades up our way; a man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as in a sinful way.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 35.—"*Green bay tree.*" The LXX translate כְּאֶזְרָח רַעֲנָן as if it were כְּאֶזְרָח לְבָנֹן, "Like the cedar of Lebanon;" but אֶזְרָח רַעֲנָן according to Delitzsch, means a noble timber-tree, one that in the course of centuries of growth has acquired a gigantic trunk, and an umbrageous, dome-like crown.

Verse 35.—"*Green bay tree.*" The marginal rendering—"a tree that groweth in his own soil"—is, no doubt, the true one. The idea generally formed of this passage by the reader of the English Bible is that the tree referred to was the bay-laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), or cherry-laurel of our gardens. But this plant belongs to an entirely different family. The bay and the Portugal laurels, whose forms of growth and evergreen leaves make them highly ornamental in shrubberies, belong to a sub-family (*Drupaceæ*, Lind.) of the rose tribe (*Rosaceæ*), but the bay tree proper, which flourisheth luxuriantly in Southern Europe, is the type of the laurel family (*Lauraceæ*). Several circumstances make it unlikely that the true bay tree represents the Hebrew *esrāch*. There is no evidence that it was ever so plentiful in Palestine as to be chosen by the psalmist in an illustration in a poem for popular use. It is indeed to be met with, but that chiefly in localities on the borders of the eastern shore of the Great Sea. The chief objection to the supposition that the bay tree was referred to by the royal poet is to be found in the Psalm itself. Having mentioned it in the lines quoted above, he adds, "Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." The idea here is not one which could be represented and illustrated by an evergreen plant, slow of growth, and yet reaching in maturity a height of above thirty feet. The words demand a quick growing tree, in a soil more than usually favourable to its growth. Thus planted, and shooting up in calm and sunshine, it would attract every eye; but when the storm broke over it, when the strong wind swept impetuously through its branches, it would not stand. Torn up by the root, and its timber comparatively useless, like Abraham's dead, it would be buried out of sight. And thus with the wicked. He was sought and could not be found.—*John Duns, D.D., F.R.S.E., in "Biblical Natural Science."*

Verse 35.—We see no force in the observation of Dr. Duns; in fact, if there were not other reasons for preferring the translation given in the following note by Wilson, we should see all the more reason to keep to the bay tree. It was a tree of permanence and of long-continued verdure, and so the prosperous wicked seem to be. They look as if their happiness would be eternal; yet, for all that, those who carefully note the dealings of providence, observe with holy wonder that divine justice cuts short their glory, and they perish utterly.—*C.H.S.*

"*I have seen the wicked in great power* (terrible, fierce, violent), *and spreading himself like a green bay tree*" (a tree in its native soil, vigorous, and luxuriant, that had never been transplanted). A striking figure of the ungodly man of the world, firmly rooted in earthly things—his native soil, grown proud and wanton in his prosperity, without fear or apprehension of any reverse.—*William Wilson.*

Verse 35.—"*Like a green bay tree,*" which produceth all leaves and no fruit.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 35.—"*I have seen the wicked,*" saith David, "*in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree.*" And why like a green bay-tree? Because in the winter, when all other trees—as the vine-tree, fig-tree, apple-tree, etc., which are more profitable trees—are withered and naked, yet the bay-tree continueth as green in the winter as the summer. So fareth it with wicked

men : when the children of God, in the storms of persecutions, and afflictions, and miseries, seem withered, and, as it were, dead, yet the wicked all that time flourish, and do appear green in the eyes of the world : they wallow in worldly wealth, but it is for their destruction ; they wax fat, but it is for the day of slaughter. It was the case of Hophni and Phinehas : the Lord gave them enough and suffered them to go on and prosper in their wickedness ; but what was the reason? Because he would destroy them.—*J. Gore's Sermon at St. Paul's*, 1633.

Verses 35, 36.—

> ——— To-day he puts forth
> The tender leaves of hopes, to-morrow blossoms,
> And bears his blushing honours thick upon him :
> Third day comes a frost, a killing frost ;
> And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
> His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,
> And then he falls, as I do.
>
> *William Shakspeare, in Henry VIII.*

Verses 36, 37.—The hawk flies high, and is as highly prized, being set upon a perch, vervelled with the gingling bells of encouragement, and carried on his master's fist ; but being once dead and picked over the perch, is cast upon the dunghill as good for nothing. The hen scrapes in the dust, not anything rewarded when she is alive, but being dead, is brought as a choice dish to her master's table. Thus wicked men are commonly set in high places, and prosper in this life ; and good men lie grovelling with their mouths in the dust, as the very underlings of the world ; but being once dead, the one is cast into the dungeon of hell, the other advanced to the kingdom of heaven : the one is into Abraham's bosom, whilst the other is tormented with the devil and his angels.—*Thomas Westfield, D.D.*, 1644.

Verse 37.—"*Mark . . . . . and behold.*" Herodotus maketh mention of a custom among the Ethiopians to set the dead bodies of their friends in glazed sepulchres, that their proportions might be obvious to the passengers. How needless soever that custom was, 'tis doubtless no more than just that the pious lineaments of their minds who die in the Lord should be presented to the living in the mirrour of art. Indeed, commendation after death is the tribute of a religious life. Good works are jewels not to be locked up in a cabinet, but to be set forth to public view. If Christ would have Mary's name remembered in the gospel until the world's end for one box of ointment poured on his head, we cannot imagine that he would have the many pious and charitable deeds of his servants to be buried in oblivion. Consult the Scriptures and you shall scarce find any godly man laid in his grave without an epitaph of honour. View the fathers, and you shall observe it their practice to honour the death of the good by giving them their deserved praises.—*Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 37.—"*The perfect man*," etc.—Divines well distinguish of a double perfection, it is *absoluta* or *comparata*. That is absolutely *perfect*, to which nothing (that may be accounted truly good) is wanting ; and thus He only is *perfectus* who is *infactus ;* God, who made all things, and himself is not made, only enjoying an all-sufficient perfection, in and of himself. That is comparatively *perfect*, in which, notwithstanding some wants there is a fulness compared with others. Thus every saint is *perfect* in comparison of the wicked among whom he liveth. In this respect it is said of Noah, "*That he was a perfect man in his generations ;*" his grace compared with the wickedness of the old world well deserving the name of perfection ; indeed every upright man is *perfect* in comparison of them who are openly bad, or but openly good ; stained with wickedness, or but painted with holiness. Thus one saint may be *perfect* if compared with another, the strong Christian in respect of the weak, whom he outstrips in grace and piety : such saints Paul means when he saith, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect ;" that is, such as have attained to greater

measures of grace than others. It was said of Benaiah, "He was more honourable than thirty, but he attained not to the first three;" and though no saint can ever attain to the perfections of the *first three*, the blessed Trinity, yet many saints may be honourable amongst *thirty perfect* in comparison of those among whom they live.

We must further distinguish of a double perfection, it is *extrinseca* and *intrinseca*. Extrinsical perfection so called, because by imputation, is that which every believer is partaker of through the perfect righteousness of Christ, whereby all his imperfections are covered; in this respect the author to the Hebrews tells us, "That by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and S. Paul tells the Colossians that they were "complete in him," meaning Christ. Indeed *omnia Dei mandata tunc facta deputantua, quando id quod non fit ignoscitur:* divine commands are then in God's account fulfilled when our defects for Christ's sake are pardoned; and the evangelical perfection of a Christian consists not *in perfectione virtutum, sed remissione vitiorum*, in the completion of our graces, but remission of our sins.

Intrinsical perfection, so called because by inhæsion, is no less rationally than usually thus distinguished, there is *perfectio partium et graduum*. He is said to be *perfect, cui nihil deest eorum quæ ad statum salutis necessaria*, who wants no graces that accompany salvation; or he is perfect, *cui nihil deest in gradibus gratiarum et virtutum;* who is not defective in the measures of those graces; both these are frequently and fitly illustrated by the resemblance of a child, and a grown man; the one whereof hath all the essential and integral parts of a man, the other a complete use and measure of those parts.—*Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 37.—"*The end.*" All wise men affect the conclusion to be best: to ride two or three miles of fair way, and to have a hundred deep and foul ones to pass afterward is uncomfortable; especially when the end is worse than the way. But let the beginning be troublesome, the progress somewhat more easy, and the journey's end happy, and there is fair amends. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*" Mark him in the setting out, he hath many oppositions; mark him in the journey, he is full of tribulations; but mark in the conclusion, and the end of that man is peace.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 37.—"*The end of that man is peace.*" Give me leave to determine what it is to end or die in peace. To end in peace with *Euthymius*, is to end in *pace cogitationis*, in peace of mind as it is opposed to doubting. To end in peace with *Cyprian*, is to end in *pace securitatis*, in peace of security, as it is opposed to final falling. To end in peace with *Origen*, is to end in *pace conscientiæ*, in peace of conscience as it is opposed to despairing. To end in peace with old *Irenæus*, is to end in *pace mortis*, in the peace of death as it is opposed to labouring. Again, to end in peace, is to end in *pace Dei*, in the peace of God which passeth all understanding, *i.e.*, far beyond men's apprehensions. To end in peace, is to end in *pace proximi*, in peace with our neighbours, *i.e.*, when no outcries or exclamations follow us. And lastly, to end in peace, is to end in *pace sui*, in peace with ourselves, *i.e.*, when no distractions or perturbations of mind molest us.—*Richard Parre.*

Verse 37.—The text may be divided into these two parts. Here is, 1. The godly man's *property;* and 2. The godly man's *privilege*. His property is perfection; his privilege is peace. Here is the saint's *character* and the saint's *crown:* he is characterised by uprightness or sincerity, and crowned with peace. Here is the Christian's *way* and his *end*, his *motion*, and his *rest*. His way is holiness, his end happiness; his motion is towards perfection and in uprightness; his rest is peace at his journey's end.—*John Whitlock, in a Funeral Sermon entitled,* "*The Upright Man and his Happy End,*" 1658.

Verse 37.—Time would fail me to tell how Christians die, nor can anything save the pen of the recording angel who has stood by their bed of death and borne them to Abraham's bosom narrate the unnumbered instances of their delightful departure from the present world, which verify the truth of the

Bible. "I could never have believed," said a dying saint, "that it was so delightful a thing to die, or that it was possible to have such views of the heavenly world as I now enjoy." The memorable Melancthon just before he died, chanted in his sleep the words, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." He seemed restless, and on being asked by one near him, "Whether there were anything more that he desired?" replied, *Aliud nihil nisi cœlum*—nothing more, unless it be heaven.—*Gardiner Spring.*

Verse 37.—To die well be sure to live well; we must not think to have Lazarus's death, and Dives's life; like him in Plutarch that would live with Crœsus, as he said, but he would die with Socrates. No, Balaam's wishes are foolish and fruitless: if you would die well, Christians, you must have a care to live well: *qualis vita, finis ita*, if you would die quietly, you must live strictly; if you would die comfortably, you must live conformably; if you would die happily, you must live holily. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.*"—*John Kitchin, M.A.*, 1660.

Verse 38.—"*The end of the wicked shall be cut off.*" The wicked in this world do easily run up without rub or interruption, many times with acclamations and applause, all the golden steps of honours and preferments; but upon the highest stair they find the most slippery standing, and the top of their earthly felicity is the most immediate and certain descent unto the greatest downfall. They are royally mounted here upon earth, and gallop swiftly over the fair and green plains of plenty and pleasures; but at the end of their race they are overturned horse and man, and tumbled headlong into the pit of destruction. They fairly glide over the sea of this world with full sail, with much calmness and serenity, and richly laden; but in the brightest sunshine, and when they least suspect it, they suddenly and without recovery, sink into the gulf of darkness and desolation.—*Robert Bolton.*

Verse 40.—"*And the Lord shall help them.*" He *shall*, he *shall*, he *shall*. Oh, the rhetoric of God! the safety of the saints! the certainty of the promises!—*John Trapp.*

Luther closes his Exposition of the Psalm with the words, Oh, shame on our faithlessness, mistrust, and vile unbelief, that we do not believe such rich, powerful, consolatory, declarations of God, and take up so readily with little grounds of offence, whenever we but hear the wicked speeches of the ungodly. Help, O God, that we may once attain to right faith. Amen.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The art of tranquillity.—*W. Jones.*

Verses 1, 2.—A frequent temptation, and a double corrective—a sight of sinners in death and in hell.

Verse 2.—How and when the wicked perish.

Verse 3.—I. A combination descriptive of holy living. II. A combination descriptive of happy living.

Verse 3.—The believer portrayed. I. His object of trust. II. His mode of life. III. His place of abode. IV. His certainty of provision.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—Read it in four ways. I. "Certainly fed," or the certainty of supply. II. "Fed in verity," or the sufficiency of the provision for soul and body. III. "Fed on truth," or the spirituality of the provision. IV. "Feed on truth," or the duty of choosing such provision.

Verse 4.—Explain the delight and the desire of the believer, and show the connection between them.

Verses 5, 6.—The higher life. I. Based on hearty resignation. II. Sustained by faith. III. Constantly unfolded by the Lord. IV. Consummated in meridian splendour.

Verse 6.—Sweet comfort for slandered saints. Where their character now is. Who shall reveal it. The gradual yet sure mannner of the revelation, and the glorious conclusion.

Verse 7.—"*Rest in the Lord.*" What? Where? When? Why? How?

Verse 7.—Peace, patience, self-possession.

Verse 7.—Stillness in God.—*Bishop Wilberforce.*

Verse 7.—"*Rest in the Lord.*" I. Rest in the *will* of God, for whatever he wills is for your good, your highest good. II. Rest in the *love* of God, and often meditate on the words of Jesus on this point, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." III. Rest in the *mercy* of God. IV. Rest in the *word* of God. V. Rest in the *relation* thy God fills to thee; he is the Father. VI. Rest in the Lord as he is manifested in Jesus, thy God *in covenant.*—*James Smith.*

Verse 8.—A SERMON FOR THE FRETFUL. I. *Cease* from present anger. It is madness, it is sin; it shuts out our prayers; it will grow into malice; it may lead to worse. II. *Forsake it* for the future. Repent of it, watch temper, discipline thy passions, etc. III. *Avoid* all kindred feelings of fretfulness, impatience, envy, etc., for they lead to evil.

Verse 9.—How the humble are the true lords of the land.

Verse 10.—I. Consider what the departed sinner has left. Possessions, joys, honours, aims, hopes, etc. II. Consider where he has gone. III. Consider whether you will share the same lot.

Verses 10, 11.—Terror to the wicked: comfort to believers.—*A. Farindon.*

Verse 11.—The meek man's delight, or "the harvest of a quiet eye."

Verse 14.—*Upright conversation.*—I. What it excludes. The horizontal or earthly, the crooked or crafty, the slanting or sinister. II. What it includes. Motive, object, language, action. III. What it achieves. It stands like a pillar; it supports like a column; it ascends like a tower; it adorns like a monument; it illuminates like a Pharos.

Verse 15.—The self-destructive nature of evil.

Verse 16.—How to make much of a little.

Verses 16, 17.—I. The owners contrasted. II. The possessions compared. III. The preference given. IV. The reasons declared.

Verse 17 (*last clause*).—I. The favoured persons. II. Their evident need, "upholding." III. Their singular blessedness, "upheld," above trial, under trial, after trial. IV. Their august Patron.

Verse 18.—The comforts derivable from a consideration of the divine knowledge. The eternity of the righteous man's possessions.

Verse 18.—I. The *persons*, "the upright." II. The *period*, "their days." These are known to God—(1) He knows them *kindly* and *graciously;* (2) He knows their *number;* (3) He knows the *nature* of them. III. The *portion*, "their inheritance shall be for ever."—*William Jay.*

Verse 18 (*last clause*).—What it is. How they come by it. How long they hold it.

Verse 19.—Good words for hard times.

Verse 21.—Monetary transactions tests of character.

Verse 22.—The divine blessing the secret of happiness. The divine displeasure the essence of misery.

Verses 23, 24.—The divine predestination. II. The divine delight. III. The divine support.

Verse 24.—Temporary trials. I. To be expected. II. Have their limit. III. Have their results. IV. Our secret comfort under them.

What may be. What cannot be. What shall be.

Verse 25.—Memorandum of an aged observer.

Verse 26.—The righteous man's merciful disposition, generous action, and rich reward.

Verse 26.—The benediction of the good man's family: what it is, and what it is not.

Verse 27.—Negative, positive, remunerative.

Verse 28.—I. The Lord's love of right. II. His faithfulness to the righteous. III. Their sure preservation thus doubly guaranteed. IV. The doom of the wicked thus certified.

Verse 29.—Canaan as a type of the righteous man's inheritance.

Verse 30.—*Our speech* as a test of godliness.

Verse 31.—I. The best thing. II. In the best place. III. With the best of results.

Verses 32, 33.—Our enemies; their inveterate malice; our safeguard and justification.

Verse 34.—I. A twofold admonition: 1. "*Wait on the Lord.*" 2. "*And keep his way;*" wait and work, wait and walk, get grace and exercise it. II. A twofold promise: 1. "*He shall exalt thee to inherit the land;*" God is the source of all elevation and honour. 2. "*When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it;*" and they will be cut off.—*William Jay.*

Verse 34.—Patient faith, persevering holiness, and promised exaltation.

Verse 34 (*last clause*).—Emotions caused in the godly by a sight of the sinner's doom.

Verse 34 (*last clause*).—The wicked are often cut off—1. Even *in life*, from their places, and riches, and prospects. 2. At *death* they are cut off from all their possessions and comforts. 3. In *the last day* they will be cut off from "the resurrection of life."—*William Jay.*

Verses 35, 36, 37.—Three memorable scenes. I. The imposing spectacle. II. The astounding disappearance. III. The delightful exit.

Verses 39, 40.—I. The doctrines of grace condensed. II. The experience of the gracious epitomised. III. The promises of grace summarised. IV. The grandest evidence of grace declared: "*because they trust in him.*"

PSALM XXXVIII.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David, to bring remembrance. *David felt as if he had been forgotten of his God, and, therefore, he recounted his sorrows and cried mightily for help under them. The same title is given to Psalm* lxx., *where in like manner the psalmist pours out his complaint before the Lord. It would be foolish to make a guess as to the point in David's history when this was written; it may be a commemoration of his own sickness and endurance of cruelty; it may, on the other hand, have been composed by him for the use of sick and slandered saints, without special reference to himself.*

DIVISIONS.—*The Psalm opens with a prayer,* 1; *continues in a long complaint,* 2—8; *pauses to dart an eye to heaven,* 9; *proceeds with a second tale of sorrow,* 10—14; *interjects another word of hopeful address to God,* 15; *a third time pours out a flood of griefs,* 16—20; *and then closes as it opened, with renewed petitioning,* 21 *and* 22.

EXPOSITION.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

1. "*O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath.*" Rebuked I must be, for I am an erring child and thou a careful Father, but throw not too much anger into the tones of thy voice; deal gently although I have sinned grievously. The anger of others I can bear, but not thine. As thy love is most sweet to my heart, so thy displeasure is most cutting to my conscience. "*Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*" Chasten me if thou wilt, it is a Father's prerogative, and to endure it obediently is a child's duty; but, O turn not the rod into a sword, smite not so as to kill. True, my sins might well inflame thee, but let thy mercy and long-suffering quench the glowing coals of thy wrath. O let me not be treated as an enemy or dealt with as a rebel. Bring to remembrance thy covenant, thy fatherhood, and my feebleness, and spare the servant.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither *is there any* rest in my bones because of my sin.

4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease:* and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

2. "*For thine arrows stick fast in me.*" By this he means both bodily and spiritual griefs, but we may suppose, especially the latter, for these are most piercing and stick the fastest. God's law applied by the Spirit to the conviction of the soul of sin, wounds deeply and rankles long; it is an arrow not lightly to be brushed out by careless mirthfulness, or to be extracted by the flattering hand of self-righteousness. The Lord knows how to shoot so that his bolts not only strike but stick. He can make convictions sink into the

innermost spirit like arrows driven in up to the head. It seems strange that the Lord should shoot at his own beloved ones, but in truth he shoots at their sins rather than them, and those who feel his sin-killing shafts in this life, shall not be slain with his hot thunderbolts in the next world. "*And thy hand presseth me sore.*" The Lord had come to close dealings with him, and pressed him down with the weight of his hand, so that he had no rest or strength left. By these two expressions we are taught that conviction of sin is a piercing and a pressing thing, sharp and sore, smarting and crushing. Those who know by experience "the terrors of the Lord," will be best able to vouch for the accuracy of such descriptions; they are true to the life.

3. "*There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger.*" Mental depression tells upon the bodily frame; it is enough to create and foster every disease, and is in itself the most painful of all diseases. Soul sickness tells upon the entire frame; it weakens the body, and then bodily weakness reacts upon the mind. One drop of divine anger sets the whole of our blood boiling with misery. "*Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*" Deeper still the malady penetrates, till the bones, the more solid parts of the system, are affected. No soundness and no rest are two sad deficiencies; yet these are both consciously gone from every awakened conscience until Jesus gives relief. God's anger is a fire that dries up the very marrow; it searches the secret parts of the belly. A man who has pain in his bones tosses to and fro in search of rest, but he finds none; he becomes worn out with agony, and so in many cases a sense of sin creates in the conscience a horrible unrest which cannot be exceeded in anguish except by hell itself.

4. "*For mine iniquities are gone over mine head.*" Like waves of the deep sea; like black mire in which a man utterly sinks. Above my hopes, my strength, and my life itself, my sin rises in its terror. Unawakened sinners think their sins to be mere shallows, but when conscience is aroused they find out the depth of iniquity. "*As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*" It is well when sin is an intolerable load, and when the remembrance of our sins burdens us beyond endurance. This verse is the genuine cry of one who feels himself undone by his transgressions and as yet sees not the great sacrifice.

5. "*My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.*" Apply this to the body, and it pictures a sad condition of disease; but read it of the soul, and it is to the life. Conscience lays on stripe after stripe till the swelling becomes a wound and suppurates, and the corruption within grows offensive. What a horrible creature man appears to be to his own consciousness when his depravity and vileness are fully opened up by the law of God, applied by the Holy Spirit! It is true there are diseases which are correctly described in this verse, when in the worst stage; but we prefer to receive the expressions as instructively figurative, since the words "because of my foolishness" point rather at a moral than a physical malady. Some of us know what it is to stink in our own nostrils so as to loathe ourselves. Even the most filthy diseases cannot be so foul as sin. No ulcers, cancers, or putrifying sores, can match the unutterable vileness and pollution of iniquity. Our own perceptions have made us feel this. We write what we do know, and testify what we have seen; and even now we shudder to think that so much of evil should lie festering deep within our nature.

6. "*I am troubled.*" I am wearied with distress, writhing with pain, in sore travail on account of sin revealed within me. "*I am bowed down greatly.*" I am brought very low, grievously weakened and frightfully depressed. Nothing so pulls a man down from all loftiness as a sense of sin and of divine wrath concerning it. "*I go mourning all the day long.*" The mourner's soul-sorrow knew no intermission, even when he went about such business as he was able to attend, he went forth like a mourner who goes to the tomb, and his words and manners were like the lamentations of those who follow the corpse. The whole verse may be the more clearly understood if we picture the Oriental mourner, covered with sackcloth and ashes, bowed as in a heap, sitting amid

squalor and dirt, performing contortions and writhings expressive of his grief; such is the awakened sinner, not in outward guise, but in very deed.

7. "*For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease*"—a hot, dry, parching disorder, probably accompanied by loathsome ulcers. Spiritually, the fire burns within when the evil of the heart is laid bare. Note the emphatic words, the evil is *loathsome*, it is in the *loins*, its seat is deep and vital—the man is *filled* with it. Those who have passed through the time of conviction understand all this. "*And there is no soundness in my flesh.*" This he had said before, and thus the Holy Spirit brings humiliating truth again and again to our memories, tears away every ground of glorying, and makes us know that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.

8. "*I am feeble.*" The original is "benumbed," or frozen, such strange incongruities and contradictions meet in a distracted mind and a sick body—it appears to itself to be alternately parched with heat and pinched with cold. Like souls in the Popish fabled Purgatory, tossed from burning furnaces into thick ice, so tormented hearts rush from one extreme to the other, with equal torture in each. A heat of fear, a chill of horror, a flaming desire, a horrible insensibility—by these successive miseries a convinced sinner is brought to death's door. "*And sore broken.*" Crushed as in a mill, pounded as in a mortar. The body of the sick man appears to be all out of joint and smashed into a palpitating pulp, and the soul of the desponding is in an equally wretched case; as a victim crushed under the car of Juggernaut, such is a soul over whose conscience the wheels of divine wrath have forced their awful way. "*I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*" Deep and hoarse is the voice of sorrow, and often inarticulate and terrible. The heart learns groanings which cannot be uttered, and the voice fails to tone and tune itself to human speech. When our prayers appear to be rather animal than spiritual, they are none the less prevalent with the pitiful Father of mercy. He hears the murmur of the heart and the roaring of the soul because of sin, and in due time he comes to relieve his afflicted.

The more closely the preceding portrait of an awakened soul is studied in the light of experience, the more will its striking accuracy appear. It cannot be a description of merely outward disorder, graphic as it might then be; it has a depth and pathos in it which only the soul's mysterious and awful agony can fully match.

9 Lord, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

9. "*Lord, all my desire is before thee.*" If unuttered, yet perceived. Blessed be God, he reads the longings of our hearts; nothing can be hidden from him; what we cannot tell to him he perfectly understands. The psalmist is conscious that he has not exaggerated, and therefore appeals to heaven for a confirmation of his words. The good Physician understands the symptoms of our disease and sees the hidden evil which they reveal, hence our case is safe in his hands. "*And my groaning is not hid from thee.*"

"He takes the meaning of our tears,
The language of our groans."

Sorrow and anguish hide themselves from the observation of man, but God spieth them out. None more lonely than the broken-hearted sinner, yet hath he the Lord for his companion.

10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

12 They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me:* and they

that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

13 But I, as a deaf *man,* heard not ; and *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.

14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.

10. "*My heart panteth.*" Here begins another tale of woe. He was so dreadfully pained by the unkindness of friends, that his heart was in a state of perpetual palpitation. Sharp and quick were the beatings of his heart ; he was like a hunted roe, filled with distressing alarms, and ready to fly out of itself with fear. The soul seeks sympathy in sorrow, and if it finds none, its sorrowful heart-throbs are incessant. "*My strength faileth me.*" What with disease and distraction, he was weakened and ready to expire. A sense of sin, and a clear perception that none can help us in our distress, are enough to bring a man to death's door, especially if there be none to speak a gentle word, and point the broken spirit to the beloved Physician. "*As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.*" Sweet light departed from his bodily eye, and consolation vanished from his soul. Those who were the very light of his eyes forsook him. Hope, the last lamp of night, was ready to go out. What a plight was the poor convict in ! Yet here we have some of us been ; and here should we have perished had not infinite mercy interposed. Now, as we remember the loving-kindness of the Lord, we see how good it was for us to find our own strength fail us, since it drove us to the strong for strength ; and how right it was that our light should all be quenched, that the Lord's light should be all in all to us.

11. "*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore.*" Whatever affection they might pretend to, they kept out of his company, lest as a sinking vessel often draws down boats with it, they might be made to suffer through his calamities. It is very hard when those who should be the first to come to the rescue, are the first to desert us. In times of deep soul trouble, even the most affectionate friends cannot enter into the sufferer's case ; let them be as anxious as they may, the sores of a tender conscience they cannot bind up. Oh, the loneliness of a soul passing under the convincing power of the Holy Ghost ! "*And my kinsmen stand afar off.*" As the women and others of our Lord's acquaintances from afar gazed on his cross, so a soul wounded for sin sees all mankind as distant spectators, and in the whole crowd finds none to aid. Often relatives hinder seekers after Jesus, oftener still they look on with unconcern, seldom enough do they endeavour to lead the penitent to Jesus.

12. "*They also that seek after my life lay snares for me.*" Alas ! for us when in addition to inward griefs, we are beset by outward temptations. David's foes endeavoured basely to ensnare him. If fair means would not overthrow him, foul should be tried. This snaring business is a vile one, the devil's own poachers alone condescend to it ; but prayer to God will deliver us, for the craft of the entire college of tempters can be met and overcome by those who are led of the Spirit. "*They that seek my hurt speak mischievous things.*" Lies and slanders poured from them like water from the town-pump. Their tongue was for ever going, and their heart for ever inventing lies. "*And imagine deceits all the day long.*" They were never done, their forge was going from morning to night. When they could not act they talked, and when they could not talk they imagined, and schemed, and plotted. Restless is the activity of malice. Bad men never have enough of evil. They compass sea and land to injure a saint ; no labour is too severe, no cost too great if they may utterly destroy the innocent. Our comfort is, that our glorious Head knows the pertinacious malignity of our foes, and will in due season put an end to it, as he even now sets a bound about it.

13. "*But I, as a deaf man, heard not.*" Well and bravely was this done. A sacred indifference to the slanders of malevolence is true courage and wise

policy. It is well to be as if we could not hear or see. Perhaps the psalmist means that this deafness on his part was unavoidable because he had no power to answer the taunts of the cruel, but felt much of the truth of their ungenerous accusations. "*And I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*" David was bravely silent, and herein was eminently typical of our Lord Jesus, whose marvellous silence before Pilate was far more eloquent than words. To abstain from self-defence is often most difficult, and frequently most wise.

14. "*Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.*" He repeats the fact of his silence that we may note it, admire it, and imitate it. We have an advocate, and need not therefore plead our own cause. The Lord will rebuke our foes, for vengeance belongs to him; we may therefore wait patiently and find it our strength to sit still.

15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

15. David committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, and so in patience was able to possess his soul. Hope in God's intervention, and belief in the power of prayer, are two most blessed stays to the soul in time of adversity. Turning right away from the creature to the sovereign Lord of all, and to him as our own covenant God, we shall find the richest solace in waiting upon him. Reputation like a fair pearl may be cast into the mire, but in due time when the Lord makes up his jewels, the godly character shall shine with unclouded splendour. Rest then, O slandered one, and let not thy soul be tossed to and fro with anxiety.

16 For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me.

17 For I *am* ready to halt, and my sorrow *is* continually before me.

18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

19 But mine enemies *are* lively, *and* they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow *the thing that* good *is*.

16. "*For I said, hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me.*" The good man was not insensible, he dreaded the sharp stings of taunting malice; he feared lest either by his conduct or his condition, he should give occasion to the wicked to triumph. This fear his earnest desires used as an argument in prayer as well as an incentive to prayer. "*When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.*" The least flaw in a saint is sure to be noticed; long before it comes to a fall the enemy beigns to rail, the merest trip of the foot sets all the dogs of hell barking. How careful ought we to be, and how importunate in prayer for upholding grace! We do not wish, like blind Samson, to make sport for our enemies; let us then beware of the treacherous Delilah of sin, by whose means our eyes may soon be put out.

17. "*For I am ready to halt.*" Like one who limps, or a person with tottering footsteps, in danger of falling. How well this befits us all. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." How small a thing will lame a Christian, how insignificant a stumbling-block may cause him to fall! This passage refers to weakness caused by pain and sorrow; the sufferer was ready to give up in despair; he was so depressed in spirit that he stumbled at a straw. Some of us painfully know what it is to be like dry tinder for the sparks of sorrow; ready to halt, ready to mourn, and sigh and cry upon any occasion, and for any cause. "*And my sorrow is continually before me.*" He did not need to look out of window to find sorrow, he felt it within, and groaned under a body of sin which was an increasing plague to him. Deep conviction continues to irritate the conscience; it will not endure a patched-up peace; but cries war

to the knife till the enmity is slain. Until the Holy Ghost applies the precious blood of Jesus, a truly awakened sinner is covered with raw wounds which cannot be healed nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment.

18. "*For I will declare mine iniquity.*" The slander of his enemies he repudiates, but the accusations of his conscience he admits. Open confession is good for the soul. When sorrow leads to hearty and penitent acknowledgment of sin it is blessed sorrow, a thing to thank God for most devoutly. "*I will be sorry for my sin.*" My confession shall be salted with briny tears. It is well not so much to bewail our sorrows as to denounce the sins which lie at the root of them. To be sorry for sin is no atonement for it, but it is the right spirit in which to repair to Jesus, who is the reconciliation and the Saviour. A man is near to the end of his trouble when he comes to an end with his sins.

19. "*But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong.*" However weak and dying the righteous man may be, the evils which oppose him are sure to be lively enough. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil, are ever afflicted with debility or inertness; this trinity of evils labour with mighty unremitting energy to overthrow us. If the devil were sick, or our lusts feeble, or Madame Bubble infirm, we might slacken prayer; but with such lively and vigorous enemies we must not cease to cry mightily unto our God. "*And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.*" Here is another misery, that as we are no match for our enemies in strength, so also they outnumber us as a hundred to one. Wrong as the cause of evil is, it is a popular one. More and more the kingdom of darkness grows. Oh, misery of miseries, that we see the professed friends of Jesus forsaking him, and the enemies of his cross and his cause mustering in increasing bands!

20. "*They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries.*" Such would a wise man wish his enemies to be. Why should we seek to be beloved of such graceless souls? It is a fine plea against our enemies when we can without injustice declare them to be like the devil, whose nature it is to render good for evil. "*Because I follow the thing that good is.*" If men hate us for this reason we may rejoice to bear it: their wrath is the unconscious homage which vice renders to virtue. This verse is not inconsistent with the writer's previous confession; we may feel equally guilty before God, and yet be entirely innocent of any wrong to our fellow men. It is one sin to acknowledge the truth, quite another thing to submit to be belied. The Lord may smite me justly, and yet I may be able to say to my fellow man, "Why smitest thou me?"

21 Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.
22 Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

21. "*Forsake me not, O Lord.*" Now is the time I need thee most. When sickness, slander, and sin, all beset a saint, he requires the especial aid of heaven, and he shall have it too. He is afraid of nothing while God is with him, and God is with him evermore. "*Be not far from me.*" Withhold not the light of thy near and dear love. Reveal thyself to me. Stand at my side. Let me feel that though friendless besides, I have a most gracious and all-sufficient friend in thee.

22. "*Make haste to help me.*" Delay would prove destruction. The poor pleader was far gone and ready to expire, only speedy help would serve his turn. See how sorrow quickens the importunity of prayer! Here is one of the sweet results of affliction, it gives new life to our pleading, and drives us with eagerness to our God. "*O Lord my salvation.*" Not my Saviour only, but my salvation. He who has the Lord on his side has salvation in present possession. Faith foresees the blessed issue of all her pleas, and in this verse begins to ascribe to God the glory of the expected mercy. We shall not be left of the Lord. His grace will succour us most opportunely, and in heaven we shall see that we had not one trial too many, or one pang too severe. A sense of sin shall melt into the joy of salvation; grief shall lead on to gratitude, and gratitude to joy unspeakable and full of glory.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—The first word, MIZMOR, or Psalm, is the designation of forty-four sacred poems, thirty-two of which are ascribed to David. The English reader must observe, that this word is not the same in the original Hebrew as that which forms the general title of the book of Psalms; the latter expressing a Hymn of Praise. The word *Psalm*, however, as used both in the context and in the titles of the individual compositions, is uniformly *Mizmor* in the original; a term which accurately defines their poetical character. To explain its proper meaning I must have recourse to the beautiful and accurate definition of Bishop Lowth. "The word *Mizmor* signifies a composition, which in a peculiar manner is cut up into sentences, short, frequent, and measured by regular intervals." . . . He adds that *Zamar* means to cut or prune, as applied to the removing superfluous branches from trees; and, after mentioning the secondary sense of the word, "to sing with a voice or instrument," gives it as his opinion, that *Mizmor* may be more properly referred to the primary sense of the root, so as to mean a poem cut up into short sentences, and pruned from all superfluity of words, which is the peculiar characteristic of the Hebrew poetry.—*John Jebb.*

Title.—The title that David gives this Psalm is worth your notice, *A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance.* David was on his death-bed as he thought, and he said it shall be a Psalm of remembrance, to bring sin to remembrance, to confess to God my uncleanness with Bathsheba, to bring to my remembrance the evils of my life. Whenever God brings thee under affliction, thou art then in a fit plight to confess sin to God, and call to remembrance thy sins.—*Christopher Love.*

Title.—The Psalm is "*to bring to remembrance.*" This seems to teach us that good things need to be kept alive in our memories, that we should often sit down, look back, retrace, and turn over in our meditation things that are past, lest at any time we should let any good thing sink into oblivion. Among the things which David brought to his own remembrance, the first and foremost were, (1,) *his past trials and his past deliverances.* The great point, however, in David's Psalm is to bring to remembrance, (2,) *the depravity of our nature.* There is, perhaps, no Psalm which more fully than this describes human nature as seen in the light which God the Holy Ghost casts upon it in the time when he convinces us of sin. I am persuaded that the description here does not tally with any known disease of the body. It is very like leprosy, but it has about it certain features which cannot be found to meet in any leprosy described either by ancient or modern writers. The fact is, it is a spiritual leprosy, it is an inward disease which is here described, and David paints it to the very life, and he would have us to recollect this. A third thing the Psalm brings to our remembrance is, (3,) *our many enemies.* David says, that his enemies laid snares for him, and sought his hurt, and spoke mischievous things, and devised and imagined deceits all the day long. "Well," says one, "how was it that David had so many enemies? How could he make so many? Must he not have been imprudent and rash, or perhaps morose?" It does not appear so in his life. He rather made enemies by his being scrupulously holy. His enemies attacked him, not because he was wicked, but as he says, in this very Psalm, they were his enemies because he loved the thing which is good. The ultimate result of the religion of Christ is to make peace everywhere, but the first result is to cause strife. Further, the Psalm reminds us of, (4,) *our gracious God.* Anything which drives us to God is a blessing, and anything which weans us from leaning on an arm of flesh, and especially that weans us from trying to stand alone, is a boon to us.—*C. H. S.*

Whole Psalm.—The most wonderful features in this Psalm, are the depth of misery into which the psalmist gradually plunges in his complaints in the first

part of it, the sudden grasp at the arm of mercy and omnipotence that is made in verse 8, and the extreme height of comfort and consolation that it reaches in the end.—*Benjamin Weiss.*

Verse 1.—"*O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath.*" But is it not an absurd request, to require God not to rebuke me in his anger; as though I thought he would rebuke me if he were not angry? Is it not a senseless suit to pray to God not to chasten me in his displeasure, as though he would chasten me if he were not displeased? The frowardest natures that are, will yet be quiet as long as they be pleased: and shall I have such a thought of the great yet gracious God, that he should be pleased and yet not be quiet? But, O my soul, is it all one, to rebuke in his anger and to rebuke when he is angry? He may rebuke when he is angry, and yet restrain and bridle in his anger; but to rebuke in his anger is to let loose the reins to his anger; and what is it to give the reins to his anger, but to make it outrun his mercy? And then what a miserable case should I be in, to have his anger to assault me, and not his mercy ready to relieve me? To have his indignation fall upon me when his lovingkindness were not by to take it off! Oh, therefore, *rebuke me not in thine anger, O God*, but let thy rebuking stay for thy mercy; chasten me not in thy displeasure, but let thy lovingkindness have the keeping of thy rod.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 1.—"*Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure,*" etc. Both these words, which we translate to *chasten*, and *hot displeasure*, are words of a heavy and of a vehement signification. They extend both to express the eternity of God's indignation, even to the binding of the soul and body in eternal chains of darkness. For the first, *jasar*, signifies in the Scriptures, *vincire*, to bind, often with ropes, often with chains; to fetter, or manacle, or pinion men that are to be executed; so that it imports a slavery, a bondage all the way, and a destruction at last. And so the word is used by Rehoboam, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." 1 Kings xii. 11. And then, the other word, *chamath*, doth not only signify "*hot displeasure,*" but that effect of *God's hot displeasure* which is intended by the prophet Esay: "Therefore hath he poured forth his fierce wrath, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." These be the fearful conditions of God's hot displeasure, to be in a furnace, and not to feel it; to be in a habit of sin, and not know what leads us into temptation; to be burnt to ashes, and so not only without all moisture, all holy tears, but, as ashes, without any possibility that any good thing can grow in us. And yet this word, *chamath*, hath a heavier signification than this; for it signifies poison itself, destruction itself, for so it is twice taken in one verse: "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent" (Psalm lviii. 4); so that this *hot displeasure* is that poison of the soul, obduration here, and that extension of that obduration, a final impenitence in this life, and an infinite impenitableness in the next, to die without any actual penitence here, and live without all possibility of future penitence for ever hereafter. David therefore foresees, that if God *rebuke in anger*, it will come to a *chastening in hot displeasure*. For what should stop him? For, "if a man sin against the Lord, who will plead for him?" says Eli. "Plead thou my cause," says David; it is only the Lord that can be of counsel with him, and plead for him; and that Lord is both the judge and angry too.—*John Donne.*

Verse 2.—"*For thine arrows stick fast in me.*" First, we shall see in what respect he calls them "*arrows:*" and therein, first, that they are *alienæ*, they are shot from others, they are not in his own power; a man shoots not an arrow at himself; and then that they are *veloces*, swift in coming, he cannot give them their time; and again, they are *vix visibiles*, though they be not altogether invisible in their cunning, yet there is required a quick eye, and an express diligence and watchfulness to avoid them; so they are arrows in the

hand of another, not his own ; and swift as they come, and invisible before they come. And secondly, they are many arrows, the victory lies not in escaping one or two. And thirdly, they "*stick*" in him : they find not David so good proof as to rebound back again, and imprint no sense : and they stick "*fast :*" though the blow be felt and the wound discerned, yet there is not a present cure, he cannot shake them off ; *infixæ sunt ,* and then, with all this, they stick fast *in him ;* that is, in all him ; in his body and soul ; in him, in his thoughts and actions ; in him, in his sins and in his good works too ; *infixæ mihi,* there is no part of him, no faculty in him, in which they stick not ; for (which may well be another consideration), that "*hand,*" which shot them, *presses him :* follows the blow, and presses him "*sore,*" that is, vehemently. But yet (which will be our conclusion), *sagittæ tuæ, thy arrows,* and *manus tua, thy hand,* these arrows that are shot, and this hand that presses him so sore, are the arrows, and the hand *of God ;* and therefore, first, they must have their effect, they cannot be disappointed ; but yet they bring their comfort with them, because they are his, because no arrows from him, no pressing with his hand, comes without that *balsamum* of mercy to heal as fast as he wounds.—*John Donne.*

Verse 2.—"*Thine arrows stick fast.*" Though importunity be to God most pleasing always, yet to us it is then most necessary when the cheerful face of God is turned into frowns, and when there is a justly conceived fear of the continuance of his anger : and have I not just cause to fear it, having the arrows of his anger sticking so fast in me ? If he had meant to make me but a butt, at which to shoot his arrows, he would quickly, I suppose, have taken them up again ; but now that he leaves them sticking in me, what can I think, but that he means to make me his quiver ; and then I may look long enough before he come to pluck them out. They are arrows, indeed, that are feathered with swiftness, and headed with sharpness ; and to give them a force in flying, they are shot, I may say, out of his cross-bow, I am sure his bow of crosses ; for no arrows can fly so fast, none pierce so deep, as the crosses and afflictions with which he hath surprised me : I may truly say surprised me, seeing when I thought myself most safe, and said, "I shall never be moved," even then, these arrows of his anger lighted upon me, and stick so fast in my flesh, that no arm but his that shot them, is ever able to draw them forth. Oh, then, as thou hast stretched forth thine arm of anger, O God, to shoot these arrows at me, so stretch forth thine arm of mercy to draw them forth, that I may rather sing hymns than dirges unto thee; and that thou mayest show thy power, as well in pardoning as thou hast done in condemning.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2.—"*Thine arrows.*" Arrows are (1) swift, (2) secret, (3) sharp (4) killing, instruments. They are instruments drawing blood and drinking blood, even unto drunkenness (Deut. xxxii. 42) ; afflictions are like arrows in all these properties. 1. Afflictions often come very speedily, with a glance as an arrow, quick as a thought. 2. Afflictions come suddenly, unexpectedly ; an arrow is upon a man afore he is aware, so are afflictions. Though Job saith, the thing he feared came upon him, he looked for this arrow before it came ; yet usually afflictions are unlooked-for guests, they thrust in upon us when we dream not of them. 3. They come with little noise ; an arrow is felt before, or, as soon as it is heard ; an arrow flies silently and secretly, stealing upon and wounding a man, unobserved and unseen. Lastly, all afflictions are sharp, and in their own nature killing and deadly. That any have good from them, is from the grace of God, not from their nature.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 2.—Let no one think these expressions of penitence (verses 1—4) overstrained or excessive. They are the words of the Holy Spirit of God, speaking by the mouth of the man after God's own heart. If we were as repentant as David, we should bring home to ourselves his language ; as it is, our affections are chilled, and therefore we do not enter into his words. . . . . And let us observe how all the miseries are referred to their proper end. The sin is not bewailed merely on account of its ill effect on the guilty one, but on account of the despite done to God. The psalmist's first thought is the "*anger*" of the

Lord, and his "*hot displeasure.*" It is not the "arrows" that afflict him so much as that they are God's. "*Thine* arrows stick fast in me, and *thy* hand presseth me." The reason why there is no health in his flesh is because of God's displeasure. Such is true contrition, "not the sorrow of the world which worketh death, but the sorrow that worketh repentance not to be repented of."—*A Commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms. Chiefly from Ancient Sources*, [*by A. P. F.*] 1847.

Verse 2.—"*Thy hand presseth me sore.*" Not the hand of Egypt or Ashur; then were it hand for hand, a duel of some equality: hand to hand; here forces and stratagems might achieve a victory: but "*Thy hand.*" The weight of a man's blow is but weak, according to the force and pulse of his arm; as the princes of Midian answered Gideon, when he bade his son try the dint of his sword upon them; "Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength." Judges viii. 21. But "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x. 31. As Homer called the hands of Jupiter χείρες ἀεπτοι, hands whose praise could not be sufficiently spoken; which some read χείρες ἄαπτοι, hands inaccessible, irresistible for strength: all the gods in heaven could not ward a blow of Jupiter's hand. This hand never strikes but for sin; and where sin is mighty his blow is heavy.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 3.—"*Thine anger. . . . . my sin.*" I, alas! am as an anvil under two hammers; one of thine anger, another of my sin; both of them beating incessantly upon me; the hammer of thine anger beating upon my flesh and making that unsound; the hammer of my sin beating upon my bones and making them unquiet; although indeed both beat upon both; but thine anger more upon my flesh, as being more sensible; my sin more upon my bones, as being more obdurate. God's anger and sin are the two efficient causes of all misery; but the procatarctic * cause indeed is sin: God's anger, like the house that Samson pulled upon his own head, falls not upon us but when we pull it upon ourselves by sin.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3.—"*My flesh. . . . . my bones.*" I know by the unsoundness of my flesh that God is angry with me; for if it were not for his anger my flesh would be sound: but what soundness can there be in it now, when God's angry hand lies beating upon it continually, and never ceaseth? I know by the unquietness of my bones that I have sin in my bosom; for if it were not for sin my bones would be quiet. But what quietness can be in them now, when sin lies gnawing upon them incessantly with the worm of remorse? One would think my bones were far enough removed and closely enough hidden from sins doing them any hurt: yet see the searching nature, the venomous poison of sin, which pierceth through my flesh, and makes unquietness in my very bones. I know my flesh is guilty of many faults, by which it justly deserves unsoundness; but what have my bones done? for they minister no fuel to the flames of my flesh's sensuality; and why then should they be troubled? But are not my bones supporters of my flesh, and are they not by this at least accessory to my flesh's faults? As accessories, then, they are subject to the same punishment the flesh itself is, which is the principal.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3.—"*Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*" A Christian in this life is like quicksilver, which hath a principle of motion in itself, but not of rest: we are never quiet, but as the ball upon the racket, or the ship upon the waves. As long as we have sin, this is like quicksilver: a child of God is full of motion and disquiet. . . . We are here in a perpetual hurry, in a constant fluctuation; our life is like the tide; sometimes ebbing, sometimes flowing; here is no rest; and the reason is because we are out of centre. Everything is in motion till it comes at the centre; Christ is the centre of the soul; the needle of the compass trembles till it comes to the North Pole.—*Thomas Watson.*

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* As applied to diseases, signifies the exciting cause.

Verse 3.—Learn here of beggars how to procure succour and relief. Lay open thy sores, make known thy need, discover all thy misery, make not thy case better than it is. Beggars by experience find that the more miserable they appear to be, the more they are pitied, the more succoured ; and yet the mercies of the most merciful men are but as drops in comparison of the oceans of God's mercies ; and among men there are many, like the priest and Levite in the parable (Luke x. 30—32), that can pass by a naked, wounded man, left half dead, and not pity him nor succour him. But God, like the merciful Samaritan, hath always compassion on such as with sense of their misery are forced to cry out and crave help. Read how Job, chap. vi. and vii.; David, Ps. xxxviii. 3, etc., Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 10, etc., and other like saints poured out their complaints before the Lord, and withal observe what mercy was showed them of the Lord, and you may have in them both good patterns how to behave yourselves in like cases, and good encouragement so to do. This is it which God expecteth of us, and whereunto he desireth to bring us, that seeing our own emptiness and insufficiency, and the impotency and disability of others to help us, we should in all humility fly to his mercy.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 4.—"*For mine iniquities are gone over mine head : as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*" David proceeds to a reason why his prayer must be vehement, why these miseries of his are so violent, and why God's anger is permanent, and he finds all this to be, because in his sins, all these venomous qualities, vehemence, violence, and continuance, were complicated, and enwrapped ; for he had sinned vehemently, in the rage of lust, and violently, in the effusion of blood, and permanently, in a long and senseless security. They are all contracted in this text into two kinds, which will be our two parts in handling these words : first, the *Supergressæ super,* "*Mine iniquities are gone over my head,*" there is the multiplicity, the number, the succession, and so the continuation of his sin ; and then, the *Gravatæ super,* "*My sins are as a heavy burden, too heavy for me,*" there is the greatness, the weight, the insupportableness of his sin. St. Augustine calls these two distinctions or considerations of sin, *ignorantiam, et difficultatem ;* first that David was ignorant, that he saw not the tide, as it swelled up upon him, *abyssus abyssum,* depth called upon depth ; and all thy waters, and all thy billows are gone over me (says he in another place) ; he perceived them not coming till they were over him, he discerned not his particular sins then when he committed them, till they came to the *supergressæ super,* to that height that he was overflowed, surrounded, his iniquities were gone over his head ; and in that St. Augustine notes *ignorantiam,* his unobservance, his inconsiderations of his own case ; and then he notes *difficultatem,* the hardness of recovering, because he that is under water hath no air to see by, no air to hear by, he hath nothing to reach to, he touches not ground, to push him up, he feels no bough to pull him up, and therein that further notes *difficultatem,* the hardness of recovering. Now Moses expresses these two miseries together, in the destruction of the Egyptians, in his song, after Israel's deliverance, and the Egyptians' submersion, "The depths have covered them" (there is the *supergressæ super,* their iniquities, in that punishment of their iniquities, were gone over their heads), and then, they sank into the bottom like a stone (says Moses), there is the *gravatæ super,* they depressed them, suppressed them, oppressed them, they were under them, and there they must lie. The Egyptians had, David had, we have, too many sins to swim above water, and too great sins to get above water again when we are sunk.—*John Donne.*

Verse 4.—"*As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*" No strength is so great but it may be overburdened ; though Samson went light away with the gates of Gaza, yet when a whole house fell upon him it crushed him to death. And such, alas ! am I ; I have had sin as a burden upon me ever since I was born, but bore it a long time as light as Samson did the gates of Gaza ; but now that I have pulled a whole house of sin upon me, how can I choose but be crushed to death with so great a weight ? And crushed, O my soul, thou

shouldst be indeed, if God for all his anger did not take some pity on thee, and for all his displeasure did not stay his hand from further chastening thee.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4.—It is of singular use to us, that the backslidings of the holy men of God are recorded in Holy Writ. Spots appear nowhere more disagreeable than when seen in a most beautiful face, or on the cleanest garment. And it is expedient to have a perfect knowledge of the filthiness of sin. We also learn from them to think humbly of ourselves, to depend on the grace of God, to keep a stricter eye upon ourselves, lest perhaps we fall into the same or more grievous sins. Gal. vi. 1.—*Herman Witsius, D.D.*, 1636—1708.

Verses 4, 5.—It is only when we can enter into *all* that is implied here that we begin to see our exceeding sinfulness. There is a certain feeling of sin which does not interfere with our pride and self-respect. We can have that sort of feeling, and say pretty carnestly, "*Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*" But it is otherwise with us when we get to know ourselves better, and to feel ourselves *loathsome* in our wickedness, when our folly and meanness and ingratitude oppress us, and we begin to loathe ourselves, and can enter into verse five. Our wounds, once an object of self-pity, and something in which we could claim sympathy and healing from our friends, have become "*corrupt*," because of the meanness and folly we feel to be in us. We hide them now, for if they were seen, would not "lovers and friends stand aloof from our sore"? Then we are silent except to God, "For in *thee*, O Lord, do I hope; *thou* wilt hear, O Lord my God," verse 15. O love of God that turns not away! O blessed Jesus, that turned not away from the leprous man that fell upon his face and said, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, but put forth thine hand and *touched* him, saying, 'I will: be thou clean,' to whom *can* we go but unto thee!"—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verse 5.—"*My wounds stink and are corrupt*," etc. These expressions seem to be in a great measure figurative, and significant rather of the diseased state of his mind than of his body.—*William Walford.*

Verse 5.—"*My wounds stink and are corrupt.*"—I know, O Lord, I have done most foolishly, to let my sores run so long without seeking for help; for now, "*My wounds stink and are corrupt*," in as ill a case as Lazarus' body was when it had been four days buried; enough to make any man despair that did not know thee as I do. For, do not I know, that *nullum tempus occurrit tibi;* do not I know thou hast as well wisdom to remedy my foolishness as power to cure my wounds? Could the grave hold Lazarus when thou didst but open thy mouth to call him forth? No more can the corruption of my sores be any hindrance to their healing when thy pleasure is to have them be cured. Although, therefore, I have done my own discretion wrong to defer my care, yet I will not do thy power wrong to despair of thy cure; for, how should I despair, who know thee to be as powerful as thou art merciful; if I may not rather say, to be as merciful as thou art powerful!—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5.—"*My wounds stink and are corrupt.*" Either they must be understood literally of the sores that were in his body (as the words in the following verse may also seem to import) which he calls *wounds*, to intimate that he looked upon them as the wheals or swelling tumours (for so the original word may signify) which the rod of God had made in his flesh, or the wounds of those arrows of which he had spoken (verse 2), "Thine arrows stick fast in me;" or else figuratively, of any other miseries that God had brought upon him, comparing them to stinking and festering sores; either to imply the long continuance of them, or the sharp pains and sorrows which he felt in himself by reason thereof. Yet some, I know, would have it meant of the shame which his sins had brought upon him.—*Arthur Jackson*

Verses 5, 6.—The spiritual feeling of sin is indispensable to the feeling of salvation. A sense of the malady must ever precede, and prepare the soul for,

a believing reception and due apprehension of the remedy. Wherever God intends to reveal his Son with power, wherever he intends to make the gospel to be "a joyful sound," he makes the conscience feel and groan under the burden of sin. And sure am I that when a man is labouring under the burden of sin, he will be full of complaint. The Bible records hundreds of the complaints of God's people under the burden of sin. "*My wounds stink and are corrupt,*" cries one, "*because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.*" "My soul," cries another, "is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave," Psalm lxxxviii. 3. "He hath led me," groans out a third, "and brought me into darkness, but not into light." Lam. iii. 2. A living man must needs cry under such circumstances. He cannot carry the burden without complaining of its weight. He cannot feel the arrow sticking in his conscience without groaning under the pain. He cannot have the worm gnawing his vitals, without complaining of its venomous tooth. He cannot feel that God is incensed against him without bitterly complaining that the Lord is his enemy. Spiritual complaint then is a mark of spiritual life, and is one which God recognises as such. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself." Jer. xxxi. 18. It shows that he has something to mourn over; something to make him groan being burdened; that sin has been opened up to him in its hateful malignancy; that it is a trouble and distress to his soul; that he cannot roll it like a sweet morsel under his tongue; but that it is found out by the penetrating eye, and punished by the chastening hand of God.—*J. C. Philpot.*—1842.

Verse 6.—"*I am troubled.*" *I writhe with pain.* This is the proper sense of the original, which means to "turn out of its proper situation, or course;" thence to be "distorted, writhed," as a person in pain. Our Bible translation, which says in the text, "*I am troubled,*" adds in the margin, "wried," an obsolete word, correctly expressing the Hebrew.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 6.—"*I go mourning all the day long.*" And now was I both a burden and a terror to myself, nor did I ever so know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid to die. Oh, how gladly now would I have been anybody but myself! Anything but a man! and in any condition but mine own! for there was nothing did pass more frequently over my mind than that it was impossible for me to be forgiven my transgression, and to be saved from wrath to come.—*John Bunyan, in "Grace Abounding."*

Verse 6.—Let a man see and feel himself under the bonds of guilt, in danger of hell, under the power of his lusts, enmity against God, and God a stranger to him; let but the sense of this condition lie upon his heart, and let him go on in his jollity if he can. What a woful creature doth a man see himself now to be! He envies the happiness of the beasts that are filled, and play in their pastures. We have heard of him who when he saw a toad, stood weeping, because God had made him a *man*, so excellent a creature, and not a toad, so abominable: the goodness of God, then, it seems, as he apprehended it, made him weep; but this man meets a toad, and he weeps also, but why? because he is a *man*, who thinks his estate infinitely worse than the condition of a toad, and if it were possible to attain it, would change states with the toad, that hath no guilt of sin, fears no wrath of God, is not under power of lusts or creatures; God is no enemy to it, which is his miserable state.—*Giles Firmin*, 1617—1697.

Verse 7.—"*For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease.*" The word here used, according to Gesenius (*Lex.*), properly denotes the internal muscles of the loins near the kidneys, to which the fat adheres. The word rendered "*loathsome*"—the word "*disease*" being supplied by our translators—is derived from קָלָה, *kalah*, a word which means to roast, to parch, as fruit, grain, etc.; and then, in the form used here, it means scorched, burned; hence, a burning or inflammation; and the whole phrase would be synonymous with *an inflammation of the kidneys.* The *word* here used does not imply that there was any eruption,

or ulcer, though it would seem from verse five that this was the fact, and that the inflammation had produced this effect.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 7.—"*A loathsome disease.*" In many things our estimates are extravagant; but we never over-estimate the evil of sin. It is as corrupting as it is damning. It covers the soul with plague-spots, with the leprosy. Isaiah i. 5, 6.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 8.—"*I am feeble,*" literally, *I am benumbed*, I have become deadly cold, cold as a corpse; possibly with reference to the burning inflammation in the previous verse, as marking the alternations in the fever fit.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 8.—"*I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*" Where sin is, there will never be but unquietness of heart; and an unquiet heart will always produce these miserable effects—feebleness of body, dejectedness of mind, and roaring of voice. But how can roaring stand with feebleness, which seems to require a strength of spirits? Is it not, therefore, a roaring, perhaps not so much in loudness as in an inarticulate expressing? that having done actions more like a beast than a man, I am forced to use a voice not so much of a man as of a beast? Or is it perhaps a roaring in spirit, which the heart may send forth though the body be feeble; or rather then most, when it is most feeble; not unlike the blaze of a candle then greatest when going out? Howsoever it be, this is certain: the heart is that unhappy plot of ground, which, receiving into it the accursed seed of sin, brings forth in the body and soul of man these miserable fruits: and how, then, can I be free from these weeds of the fruits, since I have received into me so great a measure of the seed? Oh, vile sin, that I could as well avoid thee as I can see thee, or could as easily resist thee as I deadly hate thee, I should not then complain of either feebleness of body, or dejectedness of mind, or roaring of voice; but I should perfectly enjoy that happy quietness in all my parts, which thou, O God, didst graciously bestow as a blessed dowry on our first parents at their creation.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 8.—"*I have roared,*" etc. It is difficult for a true penitent, in the bitterness of his soul, to go over the life which he has dragged on in sinfulness, without groaning and sighing from the bottom of his heart. But happy are these groans, happy these sighs, happy these sobs, since they flow from the influence of grace, and from the breath of the Holy Spirit, who himself in an ineffable manner groans in us and with us, and who forms these groans in our hearts by penitence and love! but as the violence of both, that is, of penitence and of love, cannot but burst the narrow limits of a penitent heart, it must make a vent for itself by the eyes and mouth. The eyes shed tears, and the mouth sends forth sighs and groans, which it can no longer restrain; because they are driven on by the fire of divine love, and so these lamentations frame themselves into words and intelligible sentences.—*Jean Baptiste Elias Avrillon*, 1652–1729.

Verse 8.—"*The disquietness of my heart.*" David felt pains gather about his heart, and then he cried out. The heart is the mark that God principally aims at when a Christian hath turned aside from his upright course; other outward parts he may hit and deeply wound, but this is but to make holes in the heart, where the seat of unsoundness that principally offends him is. The fire which conscience kindles, it may flash forth into the eyes, and tongue, and hands, and make a man look fearfully, speak desperately, and do bloodily, against the body; but the heat of the fire is principally within, in the furnace, in the spirit; 'tis but some sparkles and flashes only that you see come forth at the lower holes of the furnace, which you behold in the eyes, words, and deeds of such men.—*Nicholas Lockyer.*

Verse 9.—There are usually, if not always, pains with desires, especially in desires after the creature, because that oftentimes there is a frustration of our

desires, or an elongation of the things, the things are far off, hard to come by; our desires oftentimes are mute, they speak not; or the things that we desire, know not our minds: but our desires after God always speak, they are open unto God, he heareth their voice. "*Lord, all my desire is before thee,*" saith David, "*and my groaning is not hid from thee.*" Therefore it must needs be sweet, when the soul lies thus open unto God. Other desires do not assure and secure a man in the things he desires; a man may wish this and wish that, and go without both; but the soul that thus longs after God is instated in his wish, hath a present enjoyment, and certainly shall have a full enjoyment of him. "He will fulfil the desire of those that fear him: he also will hear their cry." Ps. cxlv. 19.—*Joseph Symonds.*

Verse 9.—"*My groaning is not hid from thee.*" Secret tears for secret sins are an excellent sign of a holy heart, and a healing balsam for broken spirits. God well understands the language of half words interrupted with sighs, and interprets them as the steams and breathings of a broken heart. As all our foolishness is before him to cover it, so is all our heaviness to ease it; and therefore shall our souls praise and please him more than a bullock with young horns and hoofs upon his altar. Holy mourning keeps out carnal sorrow and produces spirit joy. It stirs up the heart of a saint to beg preventing grace which no false heart can perform without secret reserves. This inward sorrow prevents open shame. God will never give up *such* souls to be trampled on by spiritual enemies, who are already humbled by themselves. In saints' humiliation there's a door opened for secret hope, because of the precious promises that are plighted to it, and especially of preventing future sin by strengthening grace. For as the love of God is the fountain of all true repentance, so it is the attractive of more incomes of divine love to the soul.—*Samuel Lee.*

Verse 10.—"*My heart panteth.*" The verb which David here uses signifies *to travel* or *wander hither and thither*, but here it is taken for the agitation or disquietude which distress of heart engenders when we know not what to do. According as men are disquieted in mind, so do they turn themselves on all sides; and so their heart may be said to turn round, or to run to and fro.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 11.—"*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.*" So miserable am I, that I am left alone as one utterly forsaken; they are all pieces that recoil and fly back at the first voice of the powder. Yet it is not so much me they stand aloof from as my sore; for if it were not for my sore, I should have enough of their company easily enough; but they cannot abide sores, their eyes are too tender to endure to see them, and yet hard enough not to relieve them. Or is it they stand aloof, that is, so near as to show they are willing enough to see them; but yet so far off as to show they have no meaning to come and help them! . . . . . .

"*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore,*" as fearing more my sore than me; but "*my kinsmen stand afar off,*" as fearing me no less than my sore; and where my lovers and friends by standing aloof do but violate the law of a contracted friendship, my kinsmen by standing afar off violate even the law of natural affection; and is not this a grievous thing, that the law of reason, the law of friendship, the law of nature, shall all be broken rather than I shall be relieved or find assistance?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 11.—"*My lovers and my friends stand afar off.*" Deserted by false friends, but conqueror through thee, to thee I speed, who though seeming to act the part of an enemy, yet never changest thy love; but lovest for ever him whom thou once hast loved. When thou seemest afar off, thou art near. I conceive this sorrow on account of the treachery of false friends, and the cowardliness of my kinsfolk, who are to me as piercing thorns rather than sweet-smelling roses. The proof of affection is seen by deeds. I hear the *name* of kinsman and friend; I see no deed. To thee, therefore, I flee, whose word is deed; for I need thy help.—*From the Latin of A. Rivetus.*

Verse 13.—"*But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*" For why should I hear when I meant not to speak? and why should I speak when I knew beforehand I should not be heard? I knew by contesting I should but provoke them, and make them more guilty that were guilty too much before. I therefore thought it better myself to be silent than to set them a roaring and make them grow outrageous. No doubt a great wisdom in David, to know that to be deaf and dumb was in this case his best course, but yet a far greater virtue that knowing it, he was able to do it. Oh, how happy should we be, if we could always do that which we know is best to be done, and if our wills were as ready to act, as our reason is able to enact; we should then decline many rocks we now run upon, we should then avoid many errors we now run into. To be deaf and dumb are indeed great inabilities and defects, when they be natural; but when they be voluntary, and I may say artificial, they are then great abilities, or rather perfections.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 13.—"*But I, as a deaf man, heard not.*" The inspired writer here compares himself to a dumb and deaf man for two reasons. In the first place, he intimates that he was so overwhelmed with the false and wicked judgments of his enemies, that he was not even permitted to open his mouth in his own defence. In the second place, he alleges before God his own patience, as a plea to induce God the more readily to have pity upon him; for such meekness and gentleness, not only with good reason, secures favour to the afflicted and the innocent, but it is also a sign of true piety.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 14.—"*Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.*" You, who truly know yourselves; by whom silent suffering, secret grief, and hidden joy are understood; by the knowledge of your own unspoken sorrow, unexpressed, because inexpressible feelings, by the consciousness of the unrevealed depths of your own nature, the earnest, but ever unsatisfied yearnings of your spirit, learn to reverence and love those by whom you are surrounded, whose inner life can never be completely read, but whom you are sure must need sacred sympathy and tender consideration. If a secret grief is constantly gnawing my heart, making my voice falter in the song of praise, may not my brother's downcast eye and heavy heart be occasioned by a similar cause; shall I condemn him for his want of gladness? No: but remember, "the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." The silent breathings of the spirit are not for our ears; the hot tears which in secret fall, are not for our eyes; in mercy has the veil been drawn round each heart; but by the sacred memory of our own sadness, let our voice be gentle, our look tender, our tread quiet, as we pass amongst the mourners.—*Jessie Coombs, in* "*Thoughts for the Inner Life,*" 1867.

Verse 15.—A man that is to go down into a deep pit, he does not throw himself headlong into it, or leap down at all adventures, but fastens a rope at top upon a cross beam or some sure place, and so lets himself down by degrees: so let thyself down into the consideration of thy sin, hanging upon Christ; and when thou art gone so low that thou canst endure no longer, but art ready to be overcome with the horror and darkness of thy miserable estate, dwell not too long at the gates of hell, lest the devil pull thee in, but wind thyself up again by renewed acts of faith, and "fly for refuge unto the hope that is set before thee." Heb. vi. 18.—*Thomas Cole* (1627—1697), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 17.—"*For I am ready to halt:*" to show my infirmity in my trials and afflictions; as Jacob halted after his wrestling with God. Gen. xxxii. 31. In the Greek, *I am ready for scourges*, that is, to suffer correction and punishment for my sins: so the Chaldee saith, *for calamity.*—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 18.—Pliny writeth of some families that had private marks on their bodies peculiar to those of that line, and every man hath, as it were, a private sin, which is most justly called his; but if we will confess our sins aright, we must not leave out that sin; nay, our chiefest spite must be against it, according to David's resolve: "*I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*" . . . . . David doth not only say, "*I will declare,*" but, "*I will be sorry for my sin.*" The people of God (1 Sam. vii. 6) in the day of their confession not only say, "We have sinned," but draw water, and pour it out before the Lord in token of contrition. We should, in confessing sin, have our hearts so affected, that our eyes, with Job, may "pour tears before God" (Job xvi. 20); that, with David, "rivers of tears may run down our eyes" (Psalm cxix. 136); yea, we should wish with Jeremiah, that "our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears." Jer. ix. 1. But, however, *nonne stillabit oculus noster?* if we cannot pour out, shall we not drop a tear? or at least, if we cannot shed a tear, let us breathe forth a sigh for our sins. It is only the heart broken with godly sorrow that sends forth a true confession.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 20.—"*They are mine enemies because I follow the thing that good is.*" It is a bold attempt to ding Satan out of his nest. If we conform us to the men of this world we find peace with them; they will not discord with us so long as we go their way; but to shame them by a godly life is an affront they cannot digest; and to rebuke their sin, findeth at their hand all that Satan disappointed or corruption provoked can devise. A sleeping dog is quiet, but being stirred, turneth all in barking and biting. Not to do as they do is matter enough of anger, but a reproof is the highest degree of disgrace in their account. All that hatred which they ought to bear to Satan and his instruments, is turned upon God in his rebuking and reclaiming servants. That anger that in remorse should burn against their own sin is set against their reprovers.—*William Struther.*

Verse 22.—"*O Lord my salvation.*" Faith the suppliant is now made faith triumphant.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Tit'e.—The art of memory. Holy memorabilia. The usefulness of sacred remembrances.

Verse 1.—The rebuke of God's wrath. I. Richly deserved. II. Reasonably dreaded. III. Earnestly deprecated.—*B. Davies.*

Verse 1.—The evil consequences of sin in this world.—*J. J. Blunt.*

Verse 1.—The bitterest of bitters, "*thy wrath;*" why deprecated; and how escaped.

Verse 2.—God sharply chasteneth many of his children, and yet for all that he loves them never a whit the less, nor withholdeth in good time his mercy from them.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—Sin causes *unrest.* He who cures it alone gives rest. Dwell on both facts.

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—Sin in its relations to us. To the *eye* pleasing. To the *heart* disappointing. In the *bones* vexing. Over the *head* overwhelming.

Verse 4.—The confession of an awakened sinner.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Sin. I. Heavy—"*a burden.*" II. Very heavy—"*A heavy burden.*" III. Superlatively heavy—"*too heavy for me.*" IV. Not immovable, for though too heavy *for me*, yet Jesus bore it.

Verse 5.—"*Foolishness.*" The folly of sin. Everything that a man has to do with sin shows his folly. I. Dallying with sin. II. Committing it. III. Continuing in it. IV. Hiding it. V. Palliating it.—*B. Davies.*

Verse 6.—Conviction of sin. Its grief, its depth, its continuance.

Verse 6.—"*I go mourning.*" I. Unlawful reasons for mourning. II. Legitimate themes for sorrow. III. Valuable alleviations of grief.

Verse 9.—The many desires of God's children: the fact that God understands them even when unexpressed; and the certainty that he will grant them.

Verse 9.—Omniscience, a source of consolation to the desponding.

Verse 13.—The wisdom, dignity, power, and difficulty of silence.

Verse 15.—Prayer, the offspring of hope.

Hope strengthened by confidence in God's answering prayer.

Verse 17.—Mr. Ready-to-Halt. His pedigree, and infirmity; his crutches, and his cure; his history, and safe departure.

Verse 18.—The excellence of penitent confession.

Verse 18.—The twin children of grace—confession and contrition: their mutual revelation and reaction.

Verse 18 (*last clause*).—There is good reason for such sorrow, God is well pleased with it. It benefits the mourner.

Verse 19.—The terrible energy and industry of the powers of evil.

Verse 22.—Faith tried, faith trembling, faith crying, faith grasping, faith conquering.

WORKS UPON THE THIRTY-EIGHTH PSALM.

"*A Sacred Septenarie,*" etc., by Archibald Symson, 1638, contains an Exposition of this Psalm. See Vol. I. p. 74.

"*Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Seven Psalmes of David, commonly called the Penitentiall Psalmes.*" By Sir Richard Baker, Knight: London: 1639, [4to.] contains "*Meditations upon the XXXVIII. Psalme.*"

PSALM XXXIX.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician, even to Jeduthun. *Jeduthun's name, which signifies praising or celebrating, was a most appropriate one for a leader in sacred psalmody. He was one of those ordained by the King's order "for song in the house of the Lord with cymbals, psalteries, and harps"* (1 *Chron.* xv. 6), *and his children after him appear to have remained in the same hallowed service, even so late as the days of Nehemiah. To have a name and a place in Zion is no small honour, and to hold this place by a long entail of grace is an unspeakable blessing. O that our household may never lack a man to stand before the Lord God of Israel to do him service. David left this somewhat sorrowful ode in Jeduthun's hands because he thought him most fit to set it to music, or because he would distribute the sacred honour of song among all the musicians who in their turn presided in the choir.* A Psalm of David. *Such as his chequered life would be sure to produce; fit effusions for a man so tempted, so strong in his passions, and yet so firm in faith.*

DIVISION.—*The psalmist, bowed down with sickness and sorrow, is burdened with unbelieving thoughts, which he resolves to stifle, lest any evil should come from their expression,* 1, 2. *But silence creates an insupportable grief, which at last demands utterance, and obtains it in the prayer of verses* 3 *to* 6, *which is almost a complaint and a sigh for death, or at best a very desponding picture of human life. From verses* 7 *to* 13 *the tone is more submissive, and the recognition of the divine hand more distinct; the cloud has evidently passed, and the mourner's heart is relieved.*

EXPOSITION.

I SAID, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, *even* from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

1. "*I said.*" I steadily resolved and registered a determination. In his great perplexity his greatest fear was lest he should sin; and, therefore, he cast about for the most likely method for avoiding it, and he determined to be silent. It is right excellent when a man can strengthen himself in a good course by the remembrance of a well and wisely-formed resolve. "What I have written I have written," or what I have spoken I will perform, may prove a good strengthener to a man in a fixed course of right. "*I will take heed to my ways.*" To avoid sin one had need be very circumspect, and keep one's actions as with a guard or garrison. Unguarded ways are generally unholy ones. Heedless is another word for graceless. In times of sickness or other trouble we must watch against the sins peculiar to such trials, especially against murmuring and repining. "*That I sin not with my tongue.*" Tongue sins are great sins; like sparks of fire ill-words spread, and do great damage. If believers utter hard words of God in times of depression, the ungodly will take them up and use them as a justification for their sinful courses. If a man's own children rail at him, no wonder if his enemies' mouths are full of abuse. Our tongue always wants watching, for it is restive as an ill-broken horse; but especially must we hold it in when the sharp cuts of the Lord's rod excite it to rebel. "*I will keep my mouth with a bridle,*" or more accurately, with a muzzle. The original does not so much mean a bridle to check the tongue as a muzzle to stop it altogether. David was not quite so wise as our translation would make him; if he had resolved to be very guarded in his speech, it would have been altogether commendable; but when he went so far as to condemn himself to entire silence, "even from good," there must have

been at least a little sullenness in his soul. In trying to avoid one fault, he fell into another. To use the tongue against God is a sin of commission, but not to use it at all involves an evident sin of omission. Commendable virtues may be followed so eagerly that we may fall into vices; to avoid Scylla we run into Charybdis. "*While the wicked is before me.*" This qualifies the silence, and almost screens it from criticism, for bad men are so sure to misuse even our holiest speech, that it is as well not to cast any of our pearls before such swine; but what if the psalmist meant, "I was silent while I had the prosperity of the wicked in my thoughts," then we see the discontent and questioning of his mind, and the muzzled mouth indicates much that is not to be commended. Yet, if we blame we must also praise, for the highest wisdom suggests that when good men are bewildered with sceptical thoughts, they should not hasten to repeat them, but should fight out their inward battle upon its own battle-field. The firmest believers are exercised with unbelief, and it would be doing the devil's work with a vengeance if they were to publish abroad all their questionings and suspicions. If I have the fever myself, there is no reason why I should communicate it to my neighbours. If any on board the vessel of my soul are diseased, I will put my heart in quarantine, and allow none to go on shore in the boat of speech till I have a clean bill of health.

2. "*I was dumb with silence.*" He was as strictly speechless as if he had been tongueless—not a word escaped him. He was as silent as the dumb. "*I held my peace, even from good.*" Neither bad nor good escaped his lips. Perhaps he feared that if he began to talk at all, he would be sure to speak amiss, and, therefore, he totally abstained. It was an easy, safe, and effectual way of avoiding sin, if it did not involve a neglect of the duty which he owed to God to speak well of his name. Our divine Lord was silent before the wicked, but not altogether so, for before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession, and asserted his kingdom. A sound course of action may be pushed to the extreme, and become a fault. "*And my sorrow was stirred.*" Inward grief was made to work and ferment by want of vent. The pent-up floods are swollen and agitated. Utterance is the natural outlet for the heart's anguish, and silence is, therefore, both an aggravation of the evil and a barrier against its cure. In such a case the resolve to hold one's peace needs powerful backing, and even this is most likely to give way when grief rushes upon the soul. Before a flood gathering in force and foaming for outlet the strongest banks are likely to be swept away. Nature may do her best to silence the expression of discontent, but unless grace comes to her rescue, she will be sure to succumb.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: *then* spake I with my tongue,

4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; *that* I may know how frail I *am*.

5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

3. "*My heart was hot within me.*" The friction of inward thoughts produced an intense mental heat. The door of his heart was shut, and with the fire of sorrow burning within, the chamber of his soul soon grew unbearable with heat. Silence is an awful thing for a sufferer, it is the surest method to produce madness. Mourner, tell your sorrow; do it first and most fully to God, but even to pour it out before some wise and godly friend is far from being wasted breath. "*While I was musing the fire burned.*" As he thought upon the ease of the wicked and his own daily affliction, he could not unravel the mystery of

providence, and therefore he became greatly agitated. While his heart was musing it was fusing, for the subject was confusing. It became harder every moment to be quiet; his volcanic soul was tossed with an inward ocean of fire, and heaved to and fro with a mental earthquake; an eruption was imminent, the burning lava must pour forth in a fiery stream. "*Then spake I with my tongue.*" The original is grandly laconic. "*I spake.*" The muzzled tongue burst all its bonds. The gag was hurled away. Misery, like murder, will out. You can silence praise, but anguish is clamorous. Resolve or no resolve, heed or no heed, sin or no sin, the impetuous torrent forced for itself a channel and swept away every restraint.

4. "*Lord.*" It is well that the vent of his soul was Godward and not towards man. Oh! if my swelling heart must speak, Lord let it speak with thee; even if there be too much of natural heat in what I say, thou wilt be more patient with me than man, and upon thy purity it can cast no stain; whereas if I speak to my fellows, they may harshly rebuke me or else learn evil from my petulance. "*Make me to know mine end.*" Did he mean the same as Elias in his agony, "Let me die, I am no better than my father"? Perhaps so. At any rate, he rashly and petulantly desired to know the end of his wretched life, that he might begin to reckon the days till death should put a finis to his woe. Impatience would pry between the folded leaves. As if there were no other comfort to be had, unbelief would fain hide itself in the grave and sleep itself into oblivion. David was neither the first nor the last who have spoken unadvisedly in prayer. Yet, there is a better meaning: the psalmist would know more of the shortness of life, that he might better bear its transient ills, and herein we may safely kneel with him, uttering the same petition. That there is no end to its misery is the hell of hell; that there is an end to life's sorrow is the hope of all who have a hope beyond the grave. God is the best teacher of the divine philosophy which looks for an expected end. They who see death through the Lord's glass, see a fair sight, which makes them forget the evil of life in foreseeing the end of life. "*And the measure of my days.*" David would fain be assured that his days would be soon over and his trials with them; he would be taught anew that life is measured out to us by wisdom, and is not a matter of chance. As the trader measures his cloth by inches, and ells, and yards, so with scrupulous accuracy is life measured out to man. "*That I may know how frail I am,*" or when I shall cease to be. Alas! poor human nature, dear as life is, man quarrels with God at such a rate that he would sooner cease to be than bear the Lord's appointment. Such pettishness in a saint! Let us wait till we are in a like position, and we shall do no better. The ship on the stocks wonders that the barque springs a leak, but when it has tried the high seas, it marvels that its timbers hold together in such storms. David's case is not recorded for our imitation, but for our learning.

5. "*Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth.*" Upon consideration, the psalmist finds little room to bewail the length of life, but rather to bemoan its shortness. What changeful creatures we are! One moment we cry to be rid of existence, and the next instant beg to have it prolonged! A handbreadth is one of the shortest natural measures, being the breadth of four fingers; such is the brevity of life, by divine appointment; God hath made it so, fixing the period in wisdom. The "*behold*" calls us to attention; to some the thoughts of life's hastiness will bring the acutest pain, to others the most solemn earnestness. How well should those live who are to live so little! Is my earthly pilgrimage so brief? then let me watch every step of it, that in the little of time there may be much of grace. "*And mine age is as nothing before thee.*" So short as not to amount to an entity. Think of eternity, and an angel is as a new-born babe, the world a fresh blown bubble, the sun a spark just fallen from the fire, and man a nullity. Before the Eternal, all the age of frail man is less than one ticking of a clock. "*Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.*" This is the surest truth, that nothing about man is either sure or true. Take man at his best, he is but a man, and man is a mere breath, unsubstantial as the wind. Man is *settled*, as the margin has it, and by divine decree it is settled that he shall

not be settled. He is constant only in inconstancy. His vanity is his only verity; his best, of which he is vain, is but vain; and this is verily true of every man, that everything about him is every way fleeting. This is sad news for those whose treasures are beneath the moon; those whose glorying is in themselves may well hang the flag half-mast; but those whose best estate is settled upon them in Christ Jesus in the land of unfading flowers, may rejoice that it is no vain thing in which they trust.

6. "*Surely every man walketh in a vain shew.*" Life is but a passing pageant. This alone is sure, that nothing is sure. All around us shadows mock us; we walk among them, and too many live for them as if the mocking images were substantial; acting their borrowed parts with zeal fit only to be spent on realities, and lost upon the phantoms of this passing scene. Worldly men walk like travellers in a mirage, deluded, duped, deceived, soon to be filled with disappointment and despair. "*Surely they are disquieted in vain.*" Men fret, and fume, and worry, and all for mere nothing. They are shadows pursuing shadows, while death pursues them. He who toils and contrives, and wearies himself for gold, for fame, for rank, even if he wins his desire, finds at the end his labour lost; for like the treasure of the miser's dream, it all vanishes when the man awakes in the world of reality. Read well this text, and then listen to the clamour of the market, the hum of the exchange, the din of the city streets, and remember that all this *noise* (for so the word means), this breach of quiet, is made about unsubstantial, fleeting vanities. Broken rest, anxious fear, over-worked brain, failing mind, lunacy, these are steps in the process of disquieting with many, and all to be rich, or, in other words, to load one's self with the thick clay; clay, too, which a man must leave so soon. "*He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*" He misses often the result of his ventures, for there are many slips between the cup and the lips. His wheat is sheaved, but an interloping robber bears it away—as often happens with the poor Eastern husbandman; or, the wheat is even stored, but the invader feasts thereon. Many work for others all unknown to them. Especially does this verse refer to those all-gathering muckrakes, who in due time are succeeded by all-scattering forks, which scatter riches as profusely as their sires gathered them parsimoniously. We know not our heirs, for our children die, and strangers fill the old ancestral halls; estates change hands, and entail, though riveted with a thousand bonds, yields to the corroding power of time. Men rise up early and sit up late to build a house, and then the stranger tramps along its passages, laughs in its chambers, and forgetful of its first builder, calls it all his own. Here is one of the evils under the sun for which no remedy can be prescribed.

7 And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope *is* in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst *it*.

10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I *am* a stranger with thee, *and* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

7. "*And now, Lord, what wait I for?*" What is there in these phantoms to enchant me? Why should I linger where the prospect is so uninviting,

and the present so trying? It were worse than vanity to linger in the abodes of sorrow to gain a heritage of emptiness. The psalmist, therefore, turns to his God, in disgust of all things else; he has thought on the world and all things in it, and is relieved by knowing that such vain things are all passing away; he has cut all cords which bound him to earth, and is ready to sound "Boot and saddle, up and away." "*My hope is in thee.*" The Lord is self-existent and true, and therefore worthy of the confidence of men; he will live when all the creatures die, and his fulness will abide when all second causes are exhausted; to him, therefore, let us direct our expectation, and on him let us rest our confidence. Away from sand to rock let all wise builders turn themselves, for if not to-day, yet surely ere long, a storm will rise before which nothing will be able to stand but that which has the lasting element of faith in God to cement it. David had but one hope, and that hope entered within the veil, hence he brought his vessel to safe anchorage, and after a little drifting all was peace.

8. "*Deliver me from all my transgressions.*" How fair a sign it is when the psalmist no longer harps upon his sorrows, but begs freedom from his sins! What is sorrow when compared with sin! Let but the poison of sin be gone from the cup, and we need not fear its gall, for the bitter will act medicinally. None can deliver a man from his transgression but the blessed One who is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins; and when he once works this great deliverance for a man from the cause, the consequences are sure to disappear too. The thorough cleansing desired is well worthy of note: to be saved from some transgressions would be of small benefit; total and perfect deliverance is needed. "*Make me not the reproach of the foolish.*" The wicked are the foolish here meant: such are always on the watch for the faults of saints, and at once make them the theme of ridicule. It is a wretched thing for a man to be suffered to make himself the butt of unholy scorn by apostacy from the right way. Alas, how many have thus exposed themselves to well-deserved reproach! Sin and shame go together, and from both David would fain be preserved.

9. "*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*" This had been far clearer if it had been rendered, "I am silenced, I will not open my mouth." Here we have a nobler silence, purged of all sullenness, and sweetened with submission. Nature failed to muzzle the mouth, but grace achieved the work in the worthiest manner. How like in appearance may two very different things appear! silence is ever silence, but it may be sinful in one case and saintly in another. What a reason for hushing every murmuring thought is the reflection, "because thou didst it"! It is his right to do as he wills, and he always wills to do that which is wisest and kindest; why should I then arraign his dealings? Nay, if it be indeed the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

10. "*Remove thy stroke away from me.*" Silence from all repining did not prevent the voice of prayer, which must never cease. In all probability the Lord would grant the psalmist's petition, for he usually removes affliction when we are resigned to it; if we kiss the rod, our Father always burns it. When we are still, the rod is soon still. It is quite consistent with resignation to pray for the removal of a trial. David was fully acquiescent in the divine will, and yet found it in his heart to pray for deliverance; indeed, it was while he was rebellious that he was prayerless about his trial, and only when he became submissive did he plead for mercy. "*I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.*" Good pleas may be found in our weakness and distress. It is well to show our Father the bruises which his scourge has made, for peradventure his fatherly pity will bind his hands, and move him to comfort us in his bosom. It is not to consume us, but to consume our sins, that the Lord aims at in his chastisements.

11. "*When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity.*" God does not trifle with his rod; he uses it because of sin, and with a view to whip us from it; hence he means his strokes to be felt, and felt they are. "*Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.*" As the moth frets the substance of the

fabric, mars all its beauty, and leaves it worn out and worthless, so do the chastisements of God discover to us our folly, weakness, and nothingness, and make us feel ourselves to be as worn-out vestures, worthless and useless. Beauty must be a poor thing when a moth can consume it and a rebuke can mar it. All our desires and delights are wretched moth-eaten things when the Lord visits us in his anger. "*Surely every man is vanity.*" He is as Trapp wittily says "a curious picture of nothing." He is unsubstantial as his own breath, a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. *Selah.* Well may this truth bring us to a pause, like the dead body of Amasa, which, lying in the way, stopped the hosts of Joab.

12. "*Hear my prayer, O Lord.*" Drown not my pleadings with the sound of thy strokes. Thou hast heard the clamour of my sins, Lord; hear the laments of my prayers. "*And give ear unto my cry.*" Here is an advance in intensity: a cry is more vehement, pathetic, and impassioned, than a prayer. The main thing was to have the Lord's ear and heart. "*Hold not thy peace at my tears.*" This is a yet higher degree of importunate pleading. Who can withstand tears, which are the irresistible weapons of weakness? How often women, children, beggars, and sinners, have betaken themselves to tears as their last resort, and therewith have won the desire of their hearts!—"This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul," falls not in vain. Tears speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues; they act as keys upon the wards of tender hearts, and mercy denies them nothing, if through them the weeper looks to richer drops, even to the blood of Jesus. When our sorrows pull up the sluices of our eyes, God will ere long interpose and turn our mourning into joy. Long may he be quiet as though he regarded not, but the hour of deliverance will come, and come like the morning when the dewdrops are plentiful. "*For I am a stranger with thee.*" Not *to* thee, but *with* thee. Like thee, my Lord, a stranger among the sons of men, an alien from my mother's children. God made the world, sustains it, and owns it, and yet men treat him as though he were a foreign intruder; and as they treat the Master, so do they deal with the servants. "'Tis no surprising thing that we should be unknown." These words may also mean, "I share the hospitality of God," like a stranger entertained by a generous host. Israel was bidden to deal tenderly with the stranger, and the God of Israel has in much compassion treated us poor aliens with unbounded liberality. "*And a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*" They knew that this was not their rest; they passed through life in pilgrim guise, they used the world as travellers use an inn, and even so do I. Why should we dream of rest on earth when our fathers' sepulchres are before our eyes? If they had been immortal, their sons would have had an abiding city this side the tomb; but as the sires were mortal, so must their offspring pass away. All of our lineage, without exception, were passing pilgrims, and such are we. David uses the fleeting nature of our life as an argument for the Lord's mercy, and it is such a one as God will regard. We show pity to poor pilgrims, and so will the Lord.

13. "*O spare me.*" Put by thy rod. Turn away thine angry face. Give me breathing time. Do not kill me. "*That I may recover strength.*" Let me have sufficient cessation from pain, to be able to take repose and nourishment, and so recruit my wasted frame. He expects to die soon, but begs a little respite from sorrow, so as to be able to rally and once more enjoy life before its close. "*Before I go hence, and be no more.*" So far as this world is concerned, death is a being no more; such a state awaits us, we are hurrying onward towards it. May the short interval which divides us from it be gilded with the sunlight of our heavenly Father's love. It is sad to be an invalid from the cradle to the grave, far worse to be under the Lord's chastisements by the month together, but what are these compared with the endurance of the endless punishment threatened to those who die in their sins!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*To Jeduthun.*" A Levite of the family of Merari, and one of the great masters of the temple music. The department superintended by Jeduthun and his colleagues in the temple service was that of the "instruments of the song of God," by which are intended the nebel or psaltery, the kinnor or harp, and the metsiltaim or cymbals. In 2 Chron. xxxv. 15, Jeduthun is called "the king's seer," which would seem to indicate that he was the medium of divine guidance to David. The name occurs in the title of Psalms xxxix., lxii., lxxvii. ; where some have thought that it indicates some special kind of composition, and others some instrument of music, but without reason.—*William Lindsay Alexander, in Kitto's Cyclopædia.*

Whole Psalm.—The most beautiful of all the elegies in the psalter.—*H. Ewald.*

Verse 1.—"*I said.*" It was to himself that he said it ; and it is impossible for any other to prove a good or a wise man, without much of this kind of speech to himself. It is one of the most excellent and distinguishing faculties of a reasonable creature ; much beyond vocal speech, for in that, some birds may imitate us ; but neither bird nor beast has anything of this kind of language, of reflecting or discoursing with itself. It is a wonderful brutality in the greatest part of men, who are so little conversant in this kind of speech, being framed and disposed for it, and which is not only of itself excellent, but of continual use and advantage ; but it is a common evil among men to go abroad, and out of themselves, which is a madness, and a true distraction. It is true, a man hath need of a well set mind, when he speaks to himself ; for otherwise, he may be worse company to himself than if he were with others. But he ought to endeavour to have a better with him, to call in God to his heart to dwell with him. If thus we did, we should find how sweet this were to speak to ourselves, by now and then intermixing our speech with discourses unto God. For want of this, the most part not only lose their time in vanity, in their converse abroad with others, but do carry in heaps of that vanity to the stock which is in their own hearts, and do converse with that in secret, which is the greatest and deepest folly in the world.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 1.—No lesson so hard to be learned of us here, as the wise and discreet government of the tongue. David promised a singular care of this, "*I said, I will take heed,*" etc. Socrates reports of one Pambo, an honest, well meaning man, who came to his friend, desiring him to teach him one of David's Psalms, he read to him this verse. He answered : this one verse is enough, if I learn it well. Nineteen years after, he said, in all that time he had hardly learned that one verse.—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 1.—"*That I sin not with my tongue*" Man's mouth, though it be but a little hole, will hold a world full of sin. For there is not any sin forbidden in the law or gospel which is not spoken by the tongue, as well as thought in the heart, or done in the life. Is it not then almost as difficult to rule the tongue as to rule the world ?—*Edward Reyner.*

Verse 1.—"*I will keep a muzzle on my mouth, whilst a wicked man is before me.*"—*New Translation, by Charles Carter.*

Verse 1.—"*While the wicked is before me.*" It is a vexation to be tied to hear so much impertinent babbling in the world, but profitable to discern and abhor it. A wonder that men can cast out so much wind, and the more they have to utter, the more they are prodigal of their own breath and of the patience of others, and careless of their own reckoning. If they believed to give account of every idle word, they would be more sparing of foolish speaking. I like either to be silent, or to speak that that may edify. At tables or meetings I cannot stop the mouths of others, yet may I close mine own ears, and by a

heavenly soul-speech with God divert my mind from fruitless talking. Though I be among them I shall as little partake their prattling as they do my meditation.—*William Struther.*

Verse 2.—"*I was dumb with silence,*" etc. That is, for a while I did what I resolved; I was so long wholly silent, that I seemed in a manner to be dumb, and not able to speak. "*I held my peace, even from good;*" that is, I forbore to speak what I might well and lawfully enough have spoken, as from alleging anything that I might have said in mine own defence, from making my complaint to God, and desiring justice at his hands, and such like; to wit, lest by degrees I should have been brought to utter anything that was evil, and whilst I intended only to speak that which was good, some unseemly word might suddenly slip from me; or lest mine enemies should misconstrue anything I spake.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 2.—"*I was dumb with silence.*"—We shall enquire what kind of *dumbness* or *silence* this of the psalmist was, which he is commended for, and which would so well beseem us when we smart under the rod of God, and then the doctrine will be, in a great measure, evident by its own light. We shall proceed in our enquiry, 1. Negatively, to prevent mistakes. 2. Positively, and show you what it doth import.

First, negatively. 1. This dumbness doth not import any such thing, as if the prophet had been brought to that pass that he had nothing to say to God by way of prayer and supplication. He was not so dumb, but that he could *pray and cry too.* Verses 8, 10, 11. 2. Nor was he so dumb, as that he could not frame to the confession and bewailing of his sins. 3. Nor was it a dumbness of stupidity and senselessness. It doth not imply any such thing, as if by degrees he grew to that pass, he cared not for, or made no matter of his affliction, but set, as the proverb is, an hard heart against his hard hap. No, he did make his moan to God, and as he smarted, so he did lament under the sense of his afflicting hand. 4. Neither was he so dumb as not to answer God's voice in the rod that was upon him. 5. Much less was he dumb, and kept silence in any such sort as they did of whom Amos speaks (vi. 10), that in their misery they took up a resolution *to mention the name of God no more,* in whom they had gloried formerly.

Secondly, affirmatively. 1. He was dumb so as neither to complain of, nor quarrel with God's providence, nor to entertain any hard thoughts against him. Complain *to* God he did; but *against* him he durst not. 2. He neither did nor durst quarrel, or fall out with the ways of holiness for all his sufferings, a thing we are naturally prone unto. 3. He was dumb, so as not to defend himself, or justify his own ways before God, as if they were righteous, and he had not deserved what he suffered. 4. He was dumb, so as to hearken to the voice of the rod. "I will (saith he in another place) hear what God the Lord will speak." Psalm lxxxv. 8. Now a man cannot listen to another while he will have all the talk and discourse to himself. 5. Lastly, the prophet was dumb, that is, he did acquiesce, and rest satisfied with God's dispensation; and that not only as good, but as best.—*Condensed from a Funeral Sermon by Thomas Burroughes, B.D., entitled,* "*A Soveraign Remedy for all kindes of Grief,*" 1657.

Verse 2.—"*I held my peace.*" A Christian being asked what fruit he had by Christ: Is not this fruit, said he, not to be moved at your reproaches? In cases of this nature, we must refer all to God; *si tu tacueris, Deus loquitur:* if thou hold thy peace, God speaks for thee; and if God speaks for us, it is better than we can speak for ourselves. David saith, *Obmutui, quia tu fecisti.* "*I held my peace, for it was thy doing.*"—*Christopher Sutton, B.D.,*—1629, *in Disce Vivere.*

Verses 2—9.—An invalid who had been ordered a couple of pills, took them very absurdly, for, in place of swallowing them at once, he rolled them about in his mouth, ground them to pieces, and so tasted their full bitterness. Gotthold

was present, and thus mused : The insults and calumnies of a slanderer and adversary are bitter pills, and all do not understand the art of swallowing without chewing them. To the Christian, however, they are wholesome in many ways. They remind him of his guilt, they try his meekness and patience, they show him what he needs to guard against, and at last they redound to his honour and glory in the sight of him for whose sake they were endured. In respect of the pills of slander, however, as well as the others, it is advisable not to roll them about continually in our minds, or judge of them according to the flesh, and the world's opinion. This will only increase their bitterness, spread the savour of it to the tongue, and fill the heart with proportional enmity. The true way is to *swallow, keep silence, and forget.* We must inwardly devour our grief, and say, "*I will be dumb, and not open my mouth, because thou didst it.*" The best antidotes to the bitterness of slander, are the sweet promises and consolations of Scripture, of which not the least is this, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. v. 11, 12. Alas, my God ! how hard it is to swallow the pills of obloquy, to bless them that curse me, to do good to them that hate me, and to pray for them that despitefully use me ! *But, Lord, as thou wilt have it so, give it as thou wilt have it*, for it is a matter in which, without thy grace, I can do nothing !—*Christian Scriver.*

Verse 3.—"*My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned.*" They say of the loadstone (that wonder in nature), when either by carelessness in keeping it, or by some accident it loses its virtue, yet by laying it some good space of time in the filings of steel, it will again recover its virtues : when the spirit of a Christian by not looking well to it, loses of its heavenly heat and liveliness, the way of recovery is by laying it asteep in this so warming and quickening meditation. Oh, how burning and flaming may we often observe the spirit of the holy psalmist David, in his acting of meditation ! Musing made him hot, yea, burning hot at the heart. Thus oft in the beginning of a Psalm we find his heart low and discouraged, but as this musing was acted and heightened, his spirit grew hotter, and at last flies all on a flame, flies up to a very high pitch of heavenly heat. Oh, how do all the conscientious practisers of meditation, ever and anon experience these happy, heavenly heats, and heart-enlargements ! Ah, if all the saints' so glorious heart-quickenings were gathered together, what a rich chain of pearls, pearls of rare experiences, would they make up of the heart-warming efficacies of meditation !—*Nathanael Ranew.*

Verse 3.—"*I was musing.*" What a blessed (shall I say duty or) privilege is prayer ! Now meditation is a help to prayer. Gersom calls it the nurse of prayer. Meditation is like oil to the lamp ; the lamp of prayer will soon go out unless meditation cherish and support it. Meditation and prayer are like two turtles, if you separate one the other dies ; a cunning angler observes the time and season when the fish bite best, and then he throws in the angle, when the heart is warmed by meditation, now is the best season to throw in the angle of prayer, and fish for mercy. After Isaac had been in the field meditating he was fit for prayer when he came home. When the gun is full of powder it is fittest to discharge. So when the mind is full of good thoughts, a Christian is fittest by prayer to discharge ; now he sends up whole volleys of sighs and groans to heaven. Meditation hath a double benefit in it, it pours in and pours out ; first it pours good thoughts into the mind, and then it pours out those thoughts again into prayer ; meditation first furnisheth with matter to pray and then it furnisheth with a heart to pray. "*I was musing,*" saith David, and the very next words are a prayer, "*Lord, make me to know mine end.*" I muse on the works of thy hands, I stretch forth my hands to thee. The musing of his head made way for the stretching forth of his hands in prayer. When Christ was upon the Mount, then he prayed : so when the soul is upon the mount of

meditation, now it is in tune for prayer. Prayer is the child of meditation: meditation leads the van, and prayer brings up the rear.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3.—"*Musing.*" Meditation is prayer in bullion, prayer in the ore, soon melted and run into holy desires. The laden cloud soon drops into rain, the piece charged soon goes off when fire is put to it. A meditating soul is *in proxima potentia* to prayer. This was an ejaculatory prayer shot from his soul when in the company of the wicked.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 3.—"*The fire burned.*" My thoughts kindled my passions.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 3.—"*The fire burned.*" Meditate so long till thou findest thy heart grow warm in this duty. If, when a man is cold you ask how long he should stand by the fire? sure, till he be thoroughly warm, and made fit for his work. So, Christian, thy heart is cold; never a day, no, not the hottest day in summer, but it freezeth there; now stand at the fire of meditation till thou findest thy affections warmed, and thou art made fit for spiritual service. David mused till his heart waxed hot within him. I will conclude this with that excellent saying of Bernard: "Lord, I will never come away from thee without thee." Let this be a Christian's resolution, not to leave off his meditations of God till he find something of God in him; some moving of the bowels after God; some flamings of love, Cant. v. 4.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3.—His company was bad, but his thoughts were good; even *while the wicked was before him his heart was hot within him, while he was musing the fire burned.* His thoughts inflame his affections with holy zeal, and this *holy fire*, as by an anteperistasis, burnt so much the hotter for the *frost* of cursed contrariety that was about it. When the careful magistrates or officers of a city break into a suspected house in the night-time, the great question is, What company have you here? So when God breaks in upon our dark hearts, the enquiry is, What thoughts have you here? Why do thoughts arise in your minds? Are ye not become judges of evil thoughts? Luke xxiv. 38; James ii. 4.—*Faithful Teat.*

Verse 3.—"*Then spake I with my tongue, Lord,*" etc. It is, indeed, a happy circumstance when that silence which has long been preserved is first broken before the Lord.—*John Morison.*

Verse 4.—"*Lord, make me to know mine end,*" etc. But did not David know this? Yes, he knew it, and yet he desires to know it. It is very fit we should ask of God that he would make us to know the things that we do know; I mean, that what we know emptily and barely, we may know spiritually and fruitfully, and if there be any measure of this knowledge, that it may increase and grow more. . . . We know we must die, and that it is no long course to the utmost period of life; yet our hearts are little instructed by this knowledge.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 4.—"*Lord, make me to know mine end.*" David would know his *end*, not so much his death—the end consuming, as Christ the Lord of life—the end and perfection of all our desires; or know it, not for vain science, but in his experience feel the reward of his patience. Though thy chastisement be sharp, it will be but short, and therein sweet; thou shalt lie still and be quiet, thou shalt sleep and be at rest, Job iii. 13, 17, 18, 19. How few and evil soever thy days be in the world, by patience and rolling thyself upon God they will prove unto thee both long enough and good.—*Edmund Layfielde.*

Verse 4.—"*Lord, make me to know mine end,*" etc. Seeing that both sorrow and joy are both able to kill you, and your life hangeth upon so small a thread, that the least gnat in the air can choke you, as it choked a pope of Rome; a little hair in your milk strangle you, as it did a councillor in Rome; a stone of a raisin stop your breath, as it did the breath of Anacreon: put not the evil day far from you, which the ordinance of God hath put so near; "Remember your Creator in time, before the days come wherein you shall say, We have no pleasure in them;" walk not always with your faces to the east, sometimes

have an eye to the west, where the sun goeth down; sit not ever in the prow of the ship, sometimes go to the stern; "stand in your watch-towers," as the creature doth (Rom. viii. 19), and wait for the hour of your deliverance; provide your armies before that dreadful king cometh to fight against you with his greater forces; order your houses before you die, that is, dispose of your bodies and souls, and all the implements of them both; let not your eyes be gadding after pleasure, nor your ear itching after rumours, nor your minds wandering in the fields, when death is in your houses; your bodies are not brass, nor your strength the strength of stones, your life none inheritance, your breath no more than as the vapour and smoke of the chimney within your nostrils, or as a stranger within your gates, coming and going again, not to return any more till the day of final redemption.—*John King.*

Verse 4.—"*Lord, make me to know mine end,*" etc. 'Tis worthy your notice, that passage you read of in Scripture, 1 Sam. x. 2. Samuel, when he had anointed Saul king, and the people had chosen him, what signal doth he give him, to confirm him anointed? It was to go to Rachel's sepulchre. Now the reason is this, that he might not be glutted with the preferments and honours he was entering upon. The emperors of Constantinople, in their inaugurations, on their coronation days, had a mason come and show them several marble stones, and ask them to choose which of those should be made ready for their grave stones. And so we read of Joseph of Arimathea, that he had his tomb in his garden, to check the pleasures of the place.—*Christopher Love.*

Verse 4.—"*How frail I am.*" Between Walsall and Iretsy, in Cheshire, is a house built in 1636, of thick oak framework, filled in with brick. Over the window of the tap-room is still legible, cut in the oak, the following Latin inscription:—*Fleres si scires unum tua tempora mensem; rides cum non scis si sit forsitan una dies.* The sense of which is: "You would weep if you knew that your life was limited to one month, yet you laugh while you know not but it may be restricted to a day." How sad the thought, that with this silent monitor, this truthful sermon before their very eyes, numbers have revelled in soul-destructive inebriation! And yet this is but a likeness of what we see constantly about us.—*Quoted in a Monthly Periodical.*

Verse 5.—"*My days.*" Man's life is styled *days* because it is not conferred upon us by wholesale, by months and years, but by retail of days, hours, minutes, moments, as to check our curiosity in making enquiry how long we have to live (verse 4): so acquainting us with the brevity thereof, we may learn to depend upon God's bounty for the *loan* of our life, employ it for his glory, and every day prepare for the Bridegroom, Christ.—*Edmund Layfielde.*

Verse 5.—"*My days an handbreadth.*" That is one of the shortest measures. We need not long lines to measure our lives by: each one carries a measure about with him, his own hand; that is the longest and fullest measure. It is not so much as a span: that might possibly have been the measure of old age in the infancy of the world, but now it is contracted to a handbreadth, and that is the longest. But how many fall short of that! Many attain not to a finger-breadth: multitudes pass from the womb to the grave; and how many end their course within the compass of childhood!—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 5.—"*Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth.*" The line wherewith our lives are measured, is made both of coarse and fine thread. 1. It is measured by itself, and considerable in its own frailty; so the just length of it is "*an handbreadth.*" 2. Secondly, with eternity, so it is found to be as nothing "*Mine age is as nothing before thee.*" . . . . "*An handbreadth,*" and is that all? So he saith, that exactly measureth them all, and whatsoever else was created with his own hand. A handbreadth is one of the shortest kind of measures. There is an ell, a cubit, and a palm or handbreadth, whereof there be two kinds, the greater and the less. The greater handbreadth is the whole space betwixt the top of the thumb and the little finger, when the hand

is extended, called a span, in account near twelve inches. The lesser hand-breadth, in a more proper and strict signification, is the just breadth of the four fingers of the hand closed together, here chiefly intended, this interpretation best agreeing with the original, and complying most with the prophet's mind, by the unanimous consent of the choice interpreters.—*Edmund Layfielde.*

Verse 5.—"*Mine age is as nothing before thee.*" 1. David might truly have said, Mine age is short *in respect of Methuselah's;* the days of Methuselah are said to be nine hundred sixty and nine years; the days of David, by computation of the time when he began and how long he reigned, were not much above three score and ten, so that he lived not so many tens as Methuselah did hundreds. 2. David might have said, Mine age is very short in comparison of *the age of the world.* St. Paul saith of the fashion of this Macrocosm, it passeth away (1 Cor. vii. 31); but the age of the microcosm, man, passeth away far swifter. 3. David might have said, Mine age in this world is exceeding little in comparison of *the duration of the other world.* 4. Finally, David might have said, Mine age is scarcely anything *before the angels,* whose duration began with this world and shall continue in the world to come, and so is coætaneous with both the worlds. But all these are far short of this comparison which he here maketh of his age *with God* which is eternal, both *a parte ante,* and *a parte post,* from everlasting to everlasting.—*Nathaniel Hardy.*

Verse 5.—"*As nothing.*" If a man be so diminutive a creature, compared with the fabric of that great world, and the world itself so little that it cannot contain the Lord, so little and light that he feels not the weight thereof upon the tip of his finger, man will well merit the name "*nothing,*" when he is placed before the Lord. The keel of man's life is laden with more vanity than verity and substance, if the searcher of the reins and heart come aboard to view it. Ten thousand of our days will not make God one year, and a thousand of our years in his sight are but "as a day when it is past, and as a watch in the night." As drops of rain are unto the sea, and as a gravel stone is in comparison of the sand, so are a thousand years to the days everlasting.—*Edmund Layfielde.*

Verse 5.—"*Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.*" The Holy Spirit is pleased elsewhere to speak more sparingly, as it were, in favour of man; he discovers the nakedness, but yet comes backward to cast a garment of lenity over it, that somewhat shadows the shame of it. "Man is like to vanity (Ps. cxliv. 4); their days consume in vanity (Ps. lxxviii. 33); Man is vanity" (Ps. xxxix. 11); but here with open mouth and unveiled terms full of emphasis, he proclaims every man to be *abstracted vanity;* and as if that were short he adds, *he is all vanity; mere vanity, all manner of vanity, altogether vanity:* nothing else, nothing less; yea, somewhat more than vanity, "*lighter than vanity*" (Ps. lxii. 9); and "vanity of vanities." Eccl. i. 2. And that no place of dubitation may be left, he ushers the doctrine unto our hearts with a strong asseveration; *assuredly, in truth,* without all controversy, "*man is altogether vanity.*"—*Edmund Layfielde.*

Verse 5.—"*Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.*" Bythner expounds it thus. "*Every man at his best state is altogether vanity;*" *hoc est omni ex parte, ita ut vanitas et miseria quæ per alias creaturas frustratim spargitur in uno homine aggregata videatur; sic homo evadit compendium omnium vanitatum quæ in creaturis extant:* that is, he is the sink and centre of all the vanities in the world; he is as it were the universe of vanity.—*Quoted in William Reynolds' Funeral Sermon for the Honourable Francis Pierrepont,* 1657.

Verse 5.—"Every Adam standing is all Abel."—*See Hebrew Text.*

Verse 5.—"*Selah.*" A little word, yet of no small difficulty to explain. Left out of the *Bible* by the *vulgar translators,* as though it were *impertinent,* where, let them consider, whether they come not within the verge of that malediction in *Revelations* xxii. 19. The *ancient* interpreters did not much *meddle* with it, and our editions leave it *uninterpreted.* But seeing "*whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through*

patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans xv. 4), and till "*heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*" (Matt. v. 18), we have sufficient warrant after the example of the learned, and encouragement to make enquiry after the mind of the Holy Spirit, in that which he hath both *commanded* to be written, and hath *commended* unto us. Wherein, like the crystal glass, I will rather present you with the true visage of antiquity, than use any new-framed feature or painting of my own.

Selah is mentioned *seventy-four times* in the Scripture, whereof seventy-one in the book of Psalms, and thrice in the prophet Habakkuk, which is written psalm-wise; and it is ever placed in the end of a Psalm or verse, four places only excepted, where, like the sun in the midst of the planets, it is seated to conjoin the precedent words with the subsequent, and communicate splendour unto both. There was a threefold use of it in ancient times, whereof the first concerned the music; the second, the matter handled unto which it was affixed; and the third, the men or congregation assembled in the temple of the Lord, which two last may still have place among us Christians, who are ingrafted into the stock Christ, from whence the Jews were cut off, but from the first we cannot properly suck such nourishment as once they did.

First of the music. The king's choir (1 Chron. xxv. 1—6; Psalm lxii., Επιγραφή; 1 Chron. xvi. 41) learned five things by it:

1st. To make a little pause, stop, or stay, when they came to *Selah*, and to meditate awhile upon the matter foregoing.

2nd. They knew by that cessation and interval that King David as he was prophesying unto the people, and praising God upon the loud sounding cymbals, was at that instant inspired and taught some new lesson. Wherefore, as men being in serious discourse, when they hear a sudden noise hold their peace to listen, saying, hark! see, lo! so David's heart being smitten by the voice of God's Spirit, the music ceased, stopped, and he checked himself as it were thus: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

3rd. It signifieth the change and variation of the music in some strains, or of the metre, or sense, or disjunction of the rhyme, or ceasing of some one sort of music, which howsoever St. Hierome makes some scruple of. The Septuagint, as often as they meet with Selah in the Hebrew text, in their Greek version translated it, *the change of the song.*

4th. It directed them to sing the same verse over again whereunto Selah was annexed. Lastly, it was their instruction to elevate and lift up their voices, praising God with louder voices and loud sounding cymbals. "*Selah*" called upon them for louder strains of music and shrillness of voice. But seeing the Jewish harmony and sweet melody is overwhelmed in the ruins of their glorious temple, we remain unskilled in their notes, which doth obscure our annotations upon it. Let this suffice for the "music."

II. "*Selah*" concerns the *text* of Scripture itself, or the matter handled, in five branches. 1st. Some think it to be only an ornament of speech, to grace the language with a sweet emphasis; or a non-significant word to complete the harmony, lest the verse should halt for want of a foot, but this conjecture is infirm, and many feet wide from the truth.

2nd. It is not only an adornation of speech, but signifies *an end* of that verse, matter, or Psalm, where it is found, and it is ever in the end of Psalm and verse, these four places only exempted from this rule: Psalm lv. 19; lvii. 3; Habakkuk iii. 3, 9. For as we write "finis" at the end of a book, song, or poem, so the Jews underwrite "Selah," "Salome," or "Amen," at the end or finishing of any canticle or work. And the modern Jews at this day, following the opinion of Aben-Ezra, take "Selah" to be the same with "Amen," using it at the end of their epithets and prayers twice or thrice indifferently; thus: "Amen, Selah, Amen, Selah," which receives some credit from this that the particular Psalms end with "Selah" (Psalm iii. 8), and the books of Psalms with "Amen." For whereas the Psalter is divided into five books, four of

them end with "Amen"—*so be it.* As you shall find: Psalm xli. 13, the end of the first book; Psalm lxxii. 19, the end of the second book; Psalm lxxxix. 52, the end of the third; and Psalm cvi. 48, the conclusion of the fourth.

3rd. *Selah* is an hyperbole or illustration of the truth by way of excess in advancing and enlarging it, to make the truth and sense more clear and evident, as if we should say, '*that is wonderful!*' or, '*that is excellent!*' and sometimes by way of *aggravation* that is '*monstrous,*' '*intolerable,*' '*horrible!*' '*The Lord came from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah.*' Habak. iii. 3. *Selah.* 1. God came with *great dignity, excellency,* and *ample majesty.* 'Many there be that say of my soul there is no help for him in God. *Selah.*' Psalm iii. 2. *Selah,* as if he had said, *Oh, monstrous,* and *horrible blasphemy,* to excommunicate a child out of the favour of his heavenly Father; and limit his mercy whose hand is *omnipotent* to relieve all that rely upon him.

4th. It serves to declare *the eternity of the truth* revealed in that Psalm or verse, though perhaps it only began then to be manifested to the church, or more fully at that time than in former ages. Howsoever, the people unto whom it was published, or the persons unto whom it was sent, were otherwise persuaded at the first publication of it. That it was a veritie from everlasting and shall continue for ever: instance Psalm iii. 8, 'Salvation belongs unto the Lord, thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.' As if he had said, 'This is a thing beyond all controversy true, that God hath ever delivered, and will for ever bless his people.' This doctrine is sempeternal and durable, that the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever. Psalm cxxxvi.

5th. It did instruct them to meditate seriously upon those themes where "Selah" was engraven, as containing matter worthy of singular observation, meditation, and remembrance, as either concerning Christ, "Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah." Psalm xxiv. 10. The mysteries of grace. "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Psalm xlvi. 7. Man's duty (Psalm iv. 4; Psalm xxxii. 5), or frailty (Psalm ix. 20; xxxii. 4). That as the diamond is of greater value than other precious stones, and the sun is more glorious than the planets, so those sentences are more resplendent, than other parcels of Scripture. Which though at the first bare view, it doth not always so appear, there being other texts of Holy Writ more excellent (if it were meet to make any comparison) where Selah is not found, yet if we dive into the *occasion, scope,* and *nature* of the sentence, we shall more willingly accept, when we consider, that it is an usual custom of the Holy Spirit, for our singular instruction and benefit, to propound things of a low and inferior nature to our deepest meditation. Instance Psalm ix. 16. "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands," which is shut up with "Higgaion Selah," meditation Selah, as if he had said, here is a matter worthy of observation and eternal meditation; the righteous should never forget this, that the wicked perish in their own counsels, and are taken in their own net. An observation worthy to be engraven in every religious person's bosom, that God will one time or other be known among the wicked by his most severe judgments executed upon them, though they would never learn by his patience and mercies to acknowledge him for their Lord. Thus far of the matter. Now it remains for a conclusion to unfold the several instructions which "Selah" afforded unto the congregation, which are these six.

1st. It served as a *note of attention and intention of the mind* to what was sung or said, Ps. iii. v. 2—8, that wheresoever they cast an eye upon "Selah," they might conceive they heard the Lord's voice from heaven speaking. "Hear this, all ye people, give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world. Both high and low, rich and poor together." Ps. xlix. 1, 2. That as their voices were lift up in singing, so much more their hearts and affections might be elevated, that their voice and hearts being both in tune, the joint harmony might be sweet in the ears of the Lord.

2ndly. It was a note of affirmation, whereby they declared their consent and assent unto the truth delivered, as we say when we approve of another's speech; right, just, you say truly, it is most certain. So their "Selah" was as much as true, certain, excellent. Instance, Ps. iii. 4, "I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. *Selah*," *i.e.*, It is most certain that the Lord knows the secrets of our hearts, and is the judge of the quick and dead, and will pass most righteous sentence upon us, giving to every man according to his deeds in the flesh, whether good or evil. Ps. lii. 3. "Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. *Selah*"—that is to say, undeniable, we all confess it, our own experience and sorrows have made us know this, that those who have not the fear of God before their eye love to speak and do all the mischief they are able against God's people, to *hurt* them rather than *help* them, to wound their innocent reputation rather than preserve it.

3rdly. It was a devout *ejaculation* of the heart and soul unto God, wishing and desiring the *accomplishment* of what was spoken or promised. Instance, Habak. iii. 13. "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people. *Selah*." As if he had said, Lord, I beseech thee, evermore, go out so to deliver thine anointed. Ps. lv. 17—19. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me; for there were many with me. God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. *Selah*," *i.e.*, *O Lord, I entreat thee*, ever bow down an ear unto my humble suit, and rise up against them that rise up against me.

4thly. It denoted their *admiration* at some strange unusual effect, whether the work of God, or wickedness of man. Ps. lvii. 3. "He shall send me from and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. *Selah*," *i.e.*, Oh, wonderful and admirable goodness of God, that is pleased to send sometimes his angel from heaven, always his mercy and truth to deliver his poor perplexed servants from them that are too strong and mighty for them, Ps. liv. 3. "Strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. *Selah*," *i.e.*, *Oh, horrible impiety* and cruelty to hunt after the life of the saints, and cast the God of life and his remembrance behind their backs.

5thly. *Of humiliation and consternation of their mind*, by the consideration of God's incomprehensible majesty, and their own great frailty and misery. Instance, Ps. lxvi. 7. "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah*," *i.e.*, here is matter of humiliation before the King of all the world, Ps. lxviii. 7, 8. "O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness. *Selah*," *i.e.*, my very heart trembled to consider; I am moved out of my place, to reflect upon that majesty before whom "the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God; even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel." Ps. xxxix. 11. "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. *Selah*." As if he should say, this may humble the proudest heart in the world, and cast him down to the ground.

6thly. *It was a note of Doxology and praising of God* in a special manner, not much unlike, or the very same with this, "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever." As for example, "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee, they shall sing to thy name. *Selah*," Ps. lxvi. 4. "Yea, Lord, in thee will we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. *Selah*," Ps. xliv. 8. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; so be it, even so be it." Ps. lxxii. 18, 19.—*Edmund Layfielde.*

Verse 6.—"*Man walketh in a vain shew.*" I see that we who live are nothing else but images, and a vain shadow.—*Sophocles.*

Verse 6 (*first clause*).—When in the Bristol election, his competitor died, Burke said, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue."—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 6.—Every carnal man walks *in a vain shew*, and yet how vain is he of his shew of vanity! He is "*disquieted in vain*," and it is only vanity which disquiets him. He labours all his life for the profits of riches, and yet in death his riches will not profit him. He that views an ox grazing in a fat pasture, concludes that he is but preparing for the day of slaughter.—*William Secker.*

Verse 6.—"*He heapeth up riches.*" This is the great foolishness and disease especially of old age, that the less way a man has to go, he makes the greater provision for it. When the hands are stiff, and fit for no other labour, they are fitted and composed for scraping together.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 6.—"*He heapeth up riches.*" The Hebrew word rendered, "*He heapeth up*," signifies *to rake together;* in which there is an allusion to the husbandman's collecting his corn together before he carries it to the barn. The metaphor is elegant, intimating the precariousness of human life, and the vanity of human acquisitions; which though heaped up together like corn, by one person, may soon become the possession of another.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 6.—

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

William Shakspeare.

Verse 6.—The plentiful showers of tears which stand in our eyes when we come from the womb, and when we draw to the tomb, are faithful witnesses of man's vanity. We bid the world "good morrow" with grief, and "good night" with a groan.—*Edmund Layfielde.*

Verse 7.—"*Lord, what wait I for?*"

At first her mother earth she holdeth deare,
And doth embrace the world and worldly things:
She flies close by the ground and houers here
And mounts not up with her celestiall wings.

Yet vnder heauen she cannot light on ought
That with her heauenly nature doth agree;
She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
She cannot in this world contented bee.

Then as a bee which among weeds doth fall,
Which seeme sweet flowers with lustre fresh and gay:
She lights on that, and this, and tasteth all,
But pleased with none, doth rise, and soare away.

So, when the soule finds here no true content,
And like Noah's doue, can no sure footing take,
She doth returne from whence she first was sent,
And flies to Him, that first her wings did make.

Sir John Davies.

Verse 7.—

O loose this frame, this knot of man untie,
That my free soul may use her wing,
Which is now pinioned with mortality,
As an entangled, hamper'd thing.
What have I left that I should stay and groan?
The most of me to heaven is fled;
My thoughts and joys are all pack'd up and gone,
And for their old acquaintance plead.

George Herbert.

Verse 7.—"*My hope is in thee.*" Sweet is it that our hope should rest in him who is never shaken; should abide in him who never changeth; should bind us to him who can hold us fast to himself, who alone is the full contentment of the soul; should, as it were, enter into him; since "*in* him is our being," who is love.—*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*, 1853.

Verse 8.—"*Make me not the reproach of the foolish.*" Let not their prosperity and my misery give them occasion to deride and reproach me for my serving of thee and trusting in thee to so little purpose.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 8.—"*Make me not the reproach of the foolish.*" Doubt not this; that of all the bitter agony which will be the portion of the lost soul at that, "Depart, ye cursed," not the least will be the bitter reproaches and derision of those evil spirits who have seduced him to his ruin. "For this morsel of meat to have sold thy birthright! For the fleshly pleasures of a few days to have bartered thine eternal jewel! For a few grains of yellow earth to have missed the city with streets of gold, and gates of several pearls! O fool, beyond all folly! O madman, beyond all insanity! Truly we have need to pray with all earnestness, '*Make me not the reproach of the foolish.*'"—*Origen, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 9.—"*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*" See David's carriage here; it was a patience not constrained, but from satisfaction of spirit: he saw love in his affliction, and that sweetened his soul.—*Joseph Symonds.*

Verse 9.—"*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*" God is training up his children here. This is the true character of his dealings with them. The education of his saints is the object he has in view. It is training for the kingdom; it is education for eternity. . . . It is the discipline of love. Every step of it is kindness. There is no wrath nor vengeance in any part of the process. The discipline of the school may be harsh and stern; but that of the family is love. We are sure of this; and the consolation which it affords is unutterable. Love will not wrong us. There will be no needless suffering. Were this but kept in mind there would be fewer hard thoughts of God amongst men, even when his strokes are most severe. I know not a better illustration of what the feelings of a saint should be, in the hour of bitterness, than the case of Richard Cameron's father. The aged saint was in prison "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." The bleeding head of his martyred son was brought to him by his unfeeling persecutors, and he was asked derisively if he knew it. "I know it, I know it,"—said the father, as he kissed the mangled forehead of his fair-haired son—"it is my son's, my own dear son's! It is the Lord! good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me or mine, but who hath made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days."—*Horatius Bonar, in "The Night of Weeping,"* 1847.

Verse 9.—"*Because thou didst it.*" This holy man had a breach made both at his body and spirit at this time; he was sick and sad; yet he remembers from whose hand the blow came. Thou, Lord, didst it; thou, whom I love dearly, and so can take it kindly; thou whom I have offended, and so take it patiently; yea, thou, who mightest have cast me into a bed of flames, instead of my bed of sickness, and therefore I accept thy correction thankfully. Thus he catches at the blow without retorting it back upon God by any quarrelling discontented language.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 9.—"*Because thou didst it.*" We digest not a blow from our equals, but a blow from our king we can well digest. If the King of kings lays his hand on our backs, let us, beloved, lay our hands on our mouths. I am sure this stopped David's mouth from venting fretful speeches. "I held my tongue and said nothing." Why didst thou so, David? "*Because thou, Lord, didst it;*" and God gives this testimony of such an one; that he is a prudent man that keeps silence at an evil time. Amos v. 13.—*Nicholas Estwick, B.D.*, 1644.

Verse 9.—Perkins, in his "*Salve for a Sick Man,*" gives the "last words" of

many holy men, among others of Calvin :—"I held my tongue, because thou, Lord, hast done it—I mourned as a dove—Lord, thou grindest me to powder, but it sufficeth me because it is thy hand."

Verse 9.—I wondered once at providence, and called white providence black and unjust, that I should be smothered in a town where no soul will take Christ off my hand. But providence hath another lustre* with God than with my bleared eyes. I proclaim myself a blind body, who knoweth not black and white, in the uncot course of God's providence. Suppose that Christ should set hell where heaven is, and devils up in glory beside the elect angels (which yet cannot be), I would I had a heart to acquiesce in his way, without further dispute. I see that infinite wisdom is the mother of his judgments, and that his ways pass finding out. I cannot learn, but I desire to learn, to bring my thoughts, will, and lusts in under‡ Christ's feet, that he may trample upon them. But, alas ! I am still upon Christ's wrong side.—*Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 9.—A little girl, in the providence of God, was born deaf and dumb. She was received, and instructed, at an institution established for these afflicted ones. A visitor was one day requested to examine the children thus sadly laid aside from childhood's common joys. Several questions were asked, and quickly answered by means of a slate and pencil. At length the gentleman wrote, "*Why were you born deaf and dumb?*" A look of anguish clouded for the moment the expressive face of the little girl ; but it quickly passed, as she took her slate, and wrote, "*Even so, Father ; for so it seemeth good in thy sight.*"—*Mrs. Rogers, in "The Shepherd King."*

Verse 10.—"*Remove thy plague away from me :*" thy plague and mine ; thine by affliction, mine by passion ; thine because thou didst send it, mine because I endure it ; thine because it comes from thy justice, mine because it answers my injustice ; remit what I have done, and remove what thou hast done. But whosoever laid it on, the Lord will take it off.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 10.—"*Remove,*" etc. Having first prayed off his sin, he would now pray off his pain, though it less troubled him ; and for ease he repaireth to *Jehovah that healeth,* as well as woundeth. Hosea vi. 1.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.*" The meaning may be, As the moth crumbles into dust under the slightest pressure, or the gentlest touch, so man dissolves with equal ease, and vanishes into darkness, under the finger of the Almighty.—*Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.*" Moths I must not omit naming. I once saw some knives, the black bone hafts of which were said to have been half-consumed by them. I also saw the remains of a hair-seated sofa which had been devoured. It is no uncommon thing to find dresses consumed in a single night. In Isaiah li. 6, "wax old" probably refers to a garment that is moth-eaten. So in Psalm vi. 7, and xxxi. 9, "*consumed*" means moth-eaten ; and again in Psalm xxxix. 11.—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 11.—"*Like a moth.*" The moths of the East are very large and beautiful, but short lived. After a few showers these splendid insects may be seen fluttering in every breeze, but the dry weather, and their numerous enemies, soon consign them to the common lot. Thus the beauty of man consumes away like that of this gay rover, dressed in his robes of purple, and scarlet, and green.—*John Kitto.*

Verse 11.—The body of man is as a "garment" to the soul : in this garment sin hath lodged a "moth," which, by degrees, fretteth and weareth away, first, the beauty, then the strength, and, finally, the contexture of its parts. Whoever has watched the progress of a consumption, or any other lingering distemper, nay, the slow and silent devastations of time alone, in the human frame, will need no farther illustration of this just and affecting similitude ; but will discern

* Shining ; appearance. † Strange. ‡ Close under.

at once the propriety of the reflection which follows upon it.—"*Surely every man is vanity.*"—*George Horne.*

Verse 11.—"*Surely every man is vanity.*" What is greatness? Can we predicate it of man, independently of his qualities as an immortal being? or of his actions, independently of principles and motives? Then the glitter of nobility is not superior to the plumage of the peacock; nor the valour of Alexander to the fury of a tiger; nor the sensual delights of Epicurus to those of any animal that roams the forest.—*Ebenezer Porter, D.D., in Lectures on Homiletics*, 1834.

Verse 12.—"*Hear my prayer, O Lord,*" etc. Now, in this prayer of David, we find three things, which are the chief qualifications of all acceptable prayers. The first is *humility*. He humbly confesses his sins, and his own weakness and worthlessness. We are not to put on a stoical, flinty kind of spirit under our affliction, that so we may seem to shun womanish repinings and complaints, lest we run into the other evil, of *despising the hand of God*, but we are to humble our proud hearts, and break our unruly passions. . . . The second qualification of this prayer is, *fervency* and *importunity*, which appears in the elegant gradation of the words, "*Hear my prayer,*" my words; if not that, yet, "*Give ear to my cry,*" which is louder; and if that prevail not, yet, "*Hold not thy peace at my tears,*" which is the loudest of all; so David, elsewhere, calls it "*the voice of my weeping.*" . . . The third qualification is *faith*. "He who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 6. And, certainly, as he that comes to God must believe this, so he that believes this, cannot but come to God; and if he be not presently answered, "he that believes makes no haste," he resolves patiently to wait for the Lord, and to go to no other.—*Condensed from Robert Leighton.*

Verse 12.—"*Hold not thy peace at my tears.*" We may, in all humility, plead our heart-breakings and weepings in sense of want of mercies which we crave, and our pantings and faintings after the same.—*Thomas Cobbett.*

Verse 12.—"*For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*" Both in thy judgment expressed (Levit. xxv. 23), and in their own opinion (Heb. xi. 13). Upon which account thou didst take a special care of them, and therefore do so to me also.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 12.—"*I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner.*" How settled soever their condition be, yet this is the temper of the saints upon earth—to count themselves but strangers. All men indeed are strangers and sojourners, but the saints do best discern it, and most freely acknowledge it. Wicked men have no firm dwelling upon earth, but that is against their intentions; their inward thought and desire is that they may abide for ever; they are strangers against their wills, their abode is uncertain in the world, and they cannot help it. And pray mark, there are two distinct words used in this case, *strangers* and *sojourners*. A stranger is one that hath his abode in a foreign country, that is not a native and a denizen of the place, though he liveth there, and in opposition to the natives he is called a stranger: as if a Frenchman should live in England, he is a stranger. But a *sojourner* is one that intendeth not to settle, but only passeth through a place, and is in motion travelling homeward. So the children of God in relation to a country of their own in another place, namely, heaven, they are denizens there, but strangers in the world; and they are sojourners and pilgrims in regard of their motion and journey towards their country.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 12.—"*A stranger.*" 1. A stranger is one that is absent from his country, and from his father's house: so are we, heaven is our country, God is there, and Christ is there. 2. A stranger in a foreign country is not known, nor valued according to his birth and breeding: so the saints walk up and down in the world like princes in disguise. 3. Strangers are liable to inconveniences: so are godly men in the world. Religion, saith Tertullian, is like a strange plant brought from a foreign country, and doth not agree with the nature of

the soil, it thriveth not in the world. 4. A stranger is patient, standeth not for ill usage, and is contented with pilgrims' fare and lodging. We are now abroad, and must expect hardship. 5. A stranger is wary, that he may not give offence, and incur the hatred and displeasure of the natives. 6. A stranger is thankful for the least favour; so we must be thankfully contented with the things God hath bestowed upon us: anything in a strange country is much. 7. A stranger, that hath a journey to go, would pass over it as soon as he can, and so we, who have a journey to heaven desire to be dissolved. 8. A stranger buyeth not such things as he cannot carry with him; he doth not buy trees, house, household stuff, but jewels and pearls, and such things as are portable. Our great care should be to get the jewels of the covenant, the graces of God's Spirit, those things that will abide with us. 9. A stranger's heart is in his country; so is a saint's. 10. A stranger is inquisitive after the way, fearing lest he should go amiss, so is a Christian. 11. A stranger provides for his return, as a merchant, that he may return richly laden. So we must appear before God in Sion. What manner of persons ought we to be? Let us return from our travel well provided.—*Condensed from Thomes Manton.*

Verse 13.—"*O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*" Man in his corrupt state is like Nebuchandezzar, he hath a beast's heart, that craves no more than the satisfaction of his sensual appetite; but when renewed by grace, then his understanding returns to him, by which he is enabled in praying for temporals to elevate his desires to a nobler end. Doth David pray that some farther time may be added to his temporal life? It is not out of a fond love for this world, but to prepare himself the better for another. Is he comforted with hopes of a longer stay here? It is not this world's carnal pleasures that kindle this joy in his holy breast, but the advantage that thereby he shall have for praising God in the land of the living. . . . . "*O spare me, that I may recover strength.*" David was not yet recovered out of that sin which had brought him exceeding low as you may perceive, ver. 10, 11. And the good man cannot think of dying with any willingness till his heart be in a holier frame: and for the peace of the gospel, serenity of conscience, and inward joy; alas! all unholiness is to it as poison is to the spirits which drink them up.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 13.—"*O spare me,*" etc. Attachment to life, the feeling cherished by the psalmist, when he thus appealed to the Sovereign of the universe, varies in its character with the occasions and the sentiments by which it is elicited and confirmed. Take one view of it, and you pronounce it *criminal;* take another, and you pronounce it *innocent;* take a third, and you pronounce it *laudable.* I. Life may inspire a *criminal* attachment, warranting our censure. The most obvious and aggravated case is that in which the attachment has its foundations in the opportunities which life affords, of procuring "the wages of unrighteousness," and "the pleasures of sin." II. Life may inspire an *innocent* attachment, awakening our sympathy. . . . Life is a scene in which we often descry a verdant and luxuriant spot, teeming with health, and ease, and harmony, and joy. We have beheld the husbands and the wives whose interwoven regards have, from year to year, alleviated all their afflictions, and heightened all their privileges. We have beheld the parents and the children whose fellowship has yielded them, through the shifting seasons, a daily feast. There are indulgent masters, and faithful servants; some neighbourhoods are undisturbed; some Christian societies are exquisitely attractive; here and there we have intercourse with those individuals in whom are seen the beauties of high character irradiated by the beams of general prosperity. You would pronounce no censure on a man thus happily connected, were he, when beginning to languish, as one "going the way of all the earth, to cry," "*O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*" III. The last view which it has been proposed to take of human life, shows that it may inspire a *laudable* attachment, at once challenging our approbation, and urging us to bring our

minds under its influence. The language before us admits of being illustrated as the prayer of a *penitent*, a *saint*, and a *philanthropist*. 1. Commend him who pleads for life as a *penitent*. Was it recently that the Holy Spirit first wounded him with the arrows of conviction? Perhaps, he doubts the source, the quality, and the result, of his powerful feelings. He knows that we may be solemnly impressed, without being converted. There are many considerations which entitle to favourable opinion those who, not having arrived at a view of their moral state, at once evident and encouraging, wish earnestly to live, till grace shall have carried them from victory to victory, and enabled them "to make" their "calling and election sure." Even they may fall from their steadfastness; and these words, "O spare me, that I may recover my strength," may proceed from the lips of a backslider, once more blushing, trembling, and petitioning to be restored. 2. Commend him, in the next place, who pleads for life, as a *saint*. . . . The distinguished office of pleading, acting, and suffering, for the advancement of the divine honour among the profane, the sensual, the formal, and the worldly is delegated, exclusively, to "the saints which are upon the earth." Yet, surely he whose attachment to life is strongly enhanced by a commission which dooms him to the contradiction of sinners, and defers "the fulness of joy," a saint so magnanimous and devoted, puts forth the expressions of a piety which the very angels are compelled to revere. 3. Commend him, finally, who pleads for life as a *philanthropist*. I refer to the generous *patron*, a man intent on doing good. I would also refer to a fond *parent*. I would now refer to "*a preacher of righteousness*," "a good minister of Jesus Christ."—*Outline of a Sermon entitled* "*Attachment to Life*," *preached by Joseph Hughes, M.A., as a Funeral Sermon for Rev. John Owen, M.A.*, 1822.

Verse 13.—May not the very elect and faithful themselves fear the day of judgment, and be far from fetching comfort at it? I answer, he may. First, at his first conversion and soon after, before he have gotten a full persuasion of the remission of his sins. And again, in some spiritual desertion, when the Lord seems to leave a man to himself, as he did David and others, he may fear to think of the same. And lastly, when he hath fallen into some great sin after he is a strong man in Christ, he may fear death and judgment, and be constrained to pray with Job and David, "*O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*"—*John Barlow's Sermon*, 1618.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verses 1, 2.—"*I was dumb*," etc. I. There is a time to be silent. He had been enabled to do this when reproached and unjustly accused by others. He did it for good; others might attribute it to sullenness, or pride, or timidity, or conscious guilt; but he did it for good. Breathe upon a polished mirror and it will evaporate and leave it brighter than before; endeavour to wipe it off, and the mark will remain. II. There is a time to meditate in silence. The greater the silence without, often the greater commotion within. "*His heart was hot.*" The more he thought, the warmer he grew. The fire of pity and compassion, the fire of love, the fire of holy zeal burned within him. III. There is a time to speak. "*Then spake I.*" The time to speak is when the truth is clear and strong in the mind, and the feeling of the truth is burning in the heart. The emotions burst forth as from a volcano. Jer. xx. 8, 9. The language should always be a faithful representation of the mind and the heart. *G. Rogers, Tutor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle College.*

Verse 2.—There is a sevenfold silence. 1. A *stoical* silence. 2. A *politic* silence. 3. A *foolish* silence. 4. A *sullen* silence. 5. A *forced* silence. 6. A *despairing* silence. 7. A *prudent*, a *holy*, a *gracious* silence.—*Thomas Brooks*' "*Mute Christian.*"

Verse 4.—"*Make me to know mine end.*" I. *What we may desire to know about our end. Not* its *date, place, circumstances,* but 1. *Its nature.* Will it be the end of saint or sinner? 2. *Its certainty.* 3. *Its nearness.* 4. *Its issues.* 5. *Its requirements.* In the shape of attention, preparation, passport. II. *Why ask God to make us know it?* Because *the knowledge is important, difficult to acquire, and can be effectually imparted by the Lord only.*—*W. Jackson.*

Verse 4.—David prays, I. That he may be enabled continually to keep in view the end of life: all things should be judged by their *end.* "Then understood I their end." Life may be honourable, and cheerful, and virtuous here; but the *end!* What will it be? II. That he may be diligent in the performance of all the duties of this life. The measure of his days, how short, how much to be done, how little time to do it in! III. He prays that he may gain much instruction and benefit from the frailties of life. "*That I may know,*" etc. My frailties may make me more humble, more diligent, while I am able for active service; more dependent upon divine strength, more patient and submissive to the divine will, more ripe for heaven.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—Man is vanity, *i.e.*, he is mortal, he is mutable. Observe how emphatically this truth is expressed here. I. *Every* man is vanity, without exception, high and low, rich and poor. II. He is so at his *best estate;* when he is young, and strong, and healthful, in wealth and honour, etc. III. He is *altogether* vanity, as vain as you can imagine. IV. *Verily* he is so. V. *Selah* is annexed, as a note commanding observation.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 6.—The vanity of man, as mortal, is here instanced in three things, and the vanity of each shown. I. The vanity of our joys and honours: "*Surely every man walketh in a vain show.*" II. The vanity of our griefs and fears: "*Surely they are disquieted in vain.*" III. The vanity of our cares and toils: "*He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*"—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 6.—The world's trinity consists, 1. In fruitless honours: what appears to them to be substantial honours are but "*a vain show.*" 2. In needless cares. "*They are disquieted in vain.*" Imaginary cares are substituted for real ones. 3. In useless riches; such as yield no lasting satisfaction to themselves, or in their descent to others.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 7.—"*What wait I for?*" 1. *For what salvation as a sinner?* Of works or grace—from Sinai or Calvary. 2. *For what consolation as a sufferer?* Earthly or heavenly? 3. *For what supply as a suppliant?* Meagre or bountiful? Present or future? 4. *For what communication as a servant?* Miraculous or ordinary? Pleasing or unacceptable? 5. *For what instruction as a pupil?* Mental or spiritual? Elating or humbling? Ornamental or useful? 6. *For what inheritance as an heir?* Sublunary or celestial?—*W. Jackson.*

Verse 7.—I. An urgent occasion. "*And now Lord,*" etc. There are seasons that should lead us specially to look up to God, and say, "*Now, Lord.*" "Father, the hour is come." II. A devout exclamation, "*Now, Lord, what wait I for?*" Where is my expectation? Where my confidence? To whom shall I look? I am nothing, the world is nothing, all earthly sources of confidence and consolation fail: "*What wait I for?*" In life, in death, in a dying world, in a coming judgment, in an eternity at hand; what is it that I need?—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 8.—I. Prayer should be *general:* "*Deliver me from all my transgressions.*" We often need anew to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Afflictions should remind us of our sins. If we pray to be delivered from all transgressions, we are sure to be delivered from the one for which affliction was sent. II. Prayer should be *particular:* "*Make me not the reproach of the foolish.*" Suffer me not so to speak or show impatience in affliction as to give occasion even to the foolish to blaspheme. The thought that many watch for our halting should be a preservative from sin.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 9.—I. The *occasion* referred to. "*I was dumb,*" etc. We are not

told what the particular trial was, that each one may apply it to his own affliction, and because all are to be viewed in the same light. II. The *conduct* of the psalmist upon that particular occasion : "*I opened not my mouth.*" 1. Not in anger and rebellion against God in murmurs or complaints. 2. Not in impatience, or complaining, or angry feelings against men. III. The *reason* he assigns for this conduct : "*Because thou didst it.*"—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 10.—I. *Afflictions are sent by God.* "*Thy strokes.*" They are strokes of *his* hand, not of the rod of the law, but of the shepherd's rod. Every affliction is *his* stroke. II. *Afflictions are removed by God.* "*Remove.*" He asks not for miracles, but that God in his own way, in the use of natural means, would interpose for his deliverance. We should seek his blessing upon the means employed for our deliverance both by ourselves and others. "*Cause to remove,*" etc. III. *Afflictions have their end from God.* "*I am consumed by the conflict,*" etc. God has a controversy with his people. It is a conflict between his will and their wills. The psalmist owns himself conquered and subdued in the struggle. We should be more anxious that this end should be accomplished than that the affliction should be removed, and when this is accomplished the affliction will be removed.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 10.—I. The *cause* of our trials : "*for iniquity.*" Oh, this trial is come to take away my comforts, my peace of mind, and the divine smile ! No, this is all the fruit to take away their sin—the dross, none of the gold—sin, nothing but sin. II. The *effect* of our trials. All that he counted desirable in this life, but is not for his real good, is "*consumed.*" His robes which are beautiful in men's esteem are moth-eaten, but the robe of righteousness upon his soul cannot decay. III. The *design* of our trials. They are not penal inflictions, but friendly *rebukes* and fatherly *corrections.* On Christ our Surety the penal consequences were laid, upon us their paternal chastisements only. IV. The *reasonableness* of our trials. "*Surely every man is vanity.*" How in a world like this could any expect to be exempt from trials ! The world is the same to the Christian as before, and his body is the same. He has a converted soul in an unconverted body, and how can he escape the external ills of life ?—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 12.—David pleads the good impressions made upon him by his affliction. I. It had set him a weeping. II. It had set him a praying. III. It had helped to wean him from the world.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—Am I a stranger and a sojourner with God ? Let me realise, let me exemplify the condition. I. Let me look for *the treatment* such characters commonly meet with. II. And surely if any of my own nation be near me, I shall *be intimate with them.* III. Let me *not be entangled* in the affairs of this life. IV. Let my affection be *set on things that are above,* and my conversation be always *in heaven.* V. Let me be *not impatient for home ;* but *prizing* it.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 13.—I. The *subject* of his petition—not that he may escape death and live always in this life, because he knows that he must go hence ; but 1. That he may be recovered from his afflictions ; and, 2. That he may continue longer in this life. Such a prayer is lawful when offered in submission to the will of God. II. The *reasons* for this petition. 1. That he may remove by his future life the calumnies that had been heaped upon him. 2. That he may have brighter evidences of his interest in the divine favour. 3. That he may become a blessing to others, his family and nation. 4. That he might have greater peace and comfort in death ; and, 5. That he might "have an entrance ministered more abundantly," etc.—*G. Rogers.*

WORK UPON THE THIRTY-NINTH PSALM.

Expository Lectures on Psalm Thirty-nine, in Archbishop Leighton's Works.

PSALM XL.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician. *Well might so exceedingly precious a Psalm be specially committed to the most skilled of the sacred musicians. The noblest music should be made tributary to a subject so incomparable. The dedication shows that the song was intended for public worship, and was not a merely personal hymn, as its being in the first person singular might lead us to suppose.* A Psalm of David. *This is conclusive as to the authorship: lifted by the Holy Spirit into the region of prophecy, David was honoured thus to write concerning a far greater than himself.*

SUBJECT.—*Jesus is evidently here, and although it might not be a violent wresting of language to see both David and his Lord, both Christ and the church, the double comment might involve itself in obscurity, and therefore we shall let the sun shine even though this should conceal the stars. Even if the New Testament were not so express upon it, we should have concluded that David spoke of our Lord in verses* 6—9, *but the apostle in* Heb. x. 5—9, *puts all conjecture out of court, and confines the meaning to him who came into the world to do the Father's will.*

DIVISION.—*From verses* 1—3, *is a personal thanksgiving, followed by a general declaration of Jehovah's goodness to his saints,* 4, 5. *In verses* 6—10, *we have an avowal of dedication to the Lord's will; verses* 11—17, *contain a prayer for deliverance from pressing trouble, and for the overthrow of enemies.*

EXPOSITION.

I WAITED patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

1. "*I waited patiently for the Lord.*" Patient waiting upon God was a special characteristic of our Lord Jesus. Impatience never lingered in his heart, much less escaped his lips. All through his agony in the garden, his trial of cruel mockings before Herod and Pilate, and his passion on the tree, he waited in omnipotence of patience. No glance of wrath, no word of murmuring, no deed of vengeance came from God's patient Lamb; he waited and waited on; was patient, and patient to perfection, far excelling all others who have according to their measure glorified God in the fires. Job on the dunghill does not equal Jesus on the cross. The Christ of God wears the imperial crown among the patient. Did the Only Begotten wait, and shall we be petulant and rebellious? "*And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*" Neither Jesus the head, nor any one of the members of his body, shall ever wait upon the Lord in vain. Mark the figure of inclining, as though the suppliant cried out of the lowest depression, and condescending love stooped to hear his feeble moans. What a marvel is it that our Lord Jesus should have to cry as we do, and wait as we do, and should receive the Father's help after the same process of faith and pleading as must be gone through by ourselves! The Saviour's prayers among the midnight mountains and in Gethsemane expound this verse. The Son of David was brought very low, but he rose to victory; and here he teaches us how to conduct our conflicts so as to succeed after the same glorious pattern of triumph. Let us arm ourselves with the same mind; and panoplied in patience, armed with prayer, and girt with faith, let us maintain the Holy War.

2. "*He brought me up also out of an horrible pit.*" When our Lord bore in

his own person the terrible curse which was due to sin, he was so cast down as to be like a prisoner in a deep, dark, fearful dungeon, amid whose horrible glooms the captive heard a noise as of rushing torrents, while overhead resounded the tramp of furious foes. Our Lord in his anguish was like a captive in the *oubliettes*, forgotten of all mankind, immured amid horror, darkness, and desolation. Yet the Lord Jehovah made him to ascend from all his abasement; he retraced his steps from that deep hell of anguish into which he had been cast as our substitute. He who thus delivered our surety *in extremis*, will not fail to liberate us from our far lighter griefs. "*Out of the miry clay.*" The sufferer was as one who cannot find a foothold, but slips and sinks. The figure indicates not only positive misery as in the former figure, but the absence of solid comfort by which sorrow might have been rendered supportable. Once give man a good foothold, and a burden is greatly lightened, but to be loaded and to be placed on slimy, slippery clay, is to be tried doubly. Reader, with humble gratitude, adore the dear Redeemer who, for thy sake, was deprived of all consolation while surrounded with every form of misery; remark his gratitude at being upborne amid his arduous labours and sufferings, and if thou too hast experienced the divine help, be sure to join thy Lord in this song. "*And set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*" The Redeemer's work is done. He reposes on the firm ground of his accomplished engagements; he can never suffer again; for ever does he reign in glory. What a comfort to know that Jesus our Lord and Saviour stands on a sure foundation in all that he is and does for us, and his goings forth in love are not liable to be cut short by failure in years to come, for God has fixed him firmly. He is for ever and eternally able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing that in the highest heavens he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Jesus is the true Joseph taken from the pit to be Lord of all. It is something more than a "sip of sweetness" to remember that if we are cast like our Lord into the lowest pit of shame and sorrow, we shall by faith rise to stand on the same elevated, sure, and everlasting rock of divine favour and faithfulness.

3. "*And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.*" At the passover, before his passion, our Lord sang one of the grand old Psalms of praise; but what is the music of his heart now, in the midst of his redeemed! What a song is that in which his glad heart for ever leads the chorus of the elect! Not Miriam's tabour nor Moses' triumphant hymn o'er Miriam's chivalry can for a moment rival that ever new and exulting song. Justice magnified and grace victorious; hell subdued and heaven glorified; death destroyed and immortality established; sin o'erthrown and righteousness resplendent; what a theme for a hymn in that day when our Lord drinketh the red wine new with us all in our heavenly Father's kindgom! Even on earth, and before his great passion, he foresaw the joy which was set before him, and was sustained by the prospect. "*Our God.*" The God of Jesus, the God of Israel, "my God and your God." How will *we* praise him, but, ah! Jesus will be the chief player on our stringed instruments; he will lead the solemn hallelujah which shall go up from the sacramental host redeemed by blood. "*Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*" A multitude that no man can number shall see the griefs and triumphs of Jesus, shall tremble because of their sinful rejection of him, and then through grace shall receive faith and become trusters in Jehovah. Here is our Lord's reward. Here is the assurance which makes preachers bold and workers persevering. Reader, are you one among the many? Note the way of salvation, a sight, a fear, a trust! Do you know what these mean by possessing and practising them in your own soul? Trusting in the Lord is the evidence, nay, the essence of salvation. He who is a true believer is evidently redeemed from the dominion of sin and Satan.

4 Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward : they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee : *if* I would declare and speak *of them,* they are more than can be numbered.

4. "*Blessed.*" This is an exclamation similar to that of the first Psalm, "Oh, the happiness of the man." God's blessings are emphatic, "I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed," indeed and in very truth. "*Is that man that maketh the Lord his trust.*" Faith obtaineth promises. A simple single-eyed confidence in God is the sure mark of blessedness. A man may be as poor as Lazarus, as hated as Mordecai, as sick as Hezekiah, as lonely as Elijah, but while his hand of faith can keep its hold on God, none of his outward afflictions can prevent his being numbered among the blessed : but the wealthiest and most prosperous man who has no faith is accursed, be he who he may. "*And respecteth not the proud.*" The proud expect all men to bow down and do them reverence, as if the worship of the golden calves were again set up in Israel ; but believing men are too noble to honour mere money-bags, or cringe before bombastic dignity. The righteous pay their respect to humble goodness, rather than to inflated self-consequence. Our Lord Jesus was in this our bright example. No flattery of kings and great ones ever fell from his lips ; he gave no honour to dishonourable men. The haughty were never his favourites. "*Nor such as turn aside to lies.*" Heresies and idolatries are lies, and so are avarice, worldliness, and pleasure-seeking. Woe to those who follow such deceptions. Our Lord was ever both the truth and the lover of truth, and the father of lies had no part in him. We must never pay deference to apostates, time-servers, and false teachers ; they are an ill leaven, and the more we purge ourselves of them the better ; they are blessed whom God preserves from all error in creed and practice. Judged by this verse, many apparently happy persons must be the reverse of blessed, for anything in the shape of a purse, a fine equipage, or a wealthy establishment, commands their reverence, whether the owner be a rake or a saint, an idiot or a philosopher. Verily, were the arch-fiend of hell to start a carriage and pair, and live like a lord, he would have thousands who would court his acquaintance.

5. "*Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done.*" Creation, providence, and redemption, teem with wonders as the sea with life. Our special attention is called by this passage to the marvels which cluster around the cross and flash from it. The accomplished redemption achieves many ends, and compasses a variety of designs ; the outgoings of the atonement are not to be reckoned up, the influences of the cross reach further than the beams of the sun. Wonders of grace beyond all enumeration take their rise from the cross ; adoption, pardon, justification, and a long chain of godlike miracles of love proceed from it. Note that our Lord here speaks of the Lord as "my God." The man Christ Jesus claimed for himself and us a covenant relationship with Jehovah. Let our interest in our God be ever to us our peculiar treasure. "*And thy thoughts which are to us-ward.*" The divine thoughts march with the divine acts, for it is not according to God's wisdom to act without deliberation and counsel. All the divine thoughts are good and gracious towards his elect. God's thoughts of love are very many, very wonderful, very practical ! Muse on them, dear reader ; no sweeter subject ever occupied your mind. God's thoughts of you are many, let not yours be few in return. "*They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.*" Their sum is so great as to forbid alike analysis and numeration. Human minds fail to measure, or to arrange in order, the Lord's ways and thoughts ; and it must always be so, for he hath said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." No maze to lose oneself in like the labyrinth of love. How sweet to be outdone, overcome and overwhelmed by the astonishing grace of the Lord our God ! "*If I would declare and speak of them,*" and surely this should be the occupation of my tongue at all seasonable opportunities, "*they*

are more than can be numbered;" far beyond all human arithmetic they are multiplied; thoughts from all eternity, thoughts of my fall, my restoration, my redemption, my conversion, my pardon, my upholding, my perfecting, my eternal reward; the list is too long for writing, and the value of the mercies too great for estimation. Yet, if we cannot show forth all the works of the Lord, let us not make this an excuse for silence; for our Lord, who is in this our best example, often spake of the tender thoughts of the great Father.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me.

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

6. Here we enter upon one of the most wonderful passages in the whole of the Old Testament, a passage in which the incarnate Son of God is seen not through a glass darkly, but as it were face to face. "*Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire.*" In themselves considered, and for their own sakes, the Lord saw nothing satisfactory in the various offerings of the ceremonial law. Neither the victim pouring forth its blood, nor the fine flour rising in smoke from the altar, could yield content to Jehovah's mind; he cared not for the flesh of bulls or of goats, neither had he pleasure in corn and wine, and oil. Typically these offerings had their worth, but when Jesus, the Antitype, came into the world, they ceased to be of value, as candles are of no estimation when the sun has arisen. "*Mine ears hast thou opened.*" Our Lord was quick to hear and perform his Father's will; his ears were as if excavated down to his soul; they were not closed up like Isaac's wells, which the Philistines filled up, but clear passages down to the fountains of his soul. The prompt obedience of our Lord is here the first idea. There is, however, no reason whatever to reject the notion that the digging of the ear here intended may refer to the boring of the ear of the servant, who refused out of love to his master to take his liberty at the year of jubilee; his perforated ear, the token of perpetual service, is a true picture of our blessed Lord's fidelity to his Father's business, and his love to his Father's children. Jesus irrevocably gave himself up to be the servant of servants for our sake and God's glory. The Septuagint, from which Paul quoted, has translated this passage, "A body hast thou prepared me:" how this reading arose it is not easy to imagine, but since apostolical authority has sanctioned the variation, we accept it as no mistake, but as an instance of various readings equally inspired. In any case, the passage represents the Only Begotten as coming into the world equipped for service; and in a real and material body, by actual life and death, putting aside all the shadows of the Mosaic law. "*Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.*" Two other forms of offering are here mentioned; tokens of gratitude and sacrifices for sin as typically presented are set aside; neither the general nor the private offerings are any longer demanded. What need of mere emblems when the substance itself is present? We learn from this verse that Jehovah values far more the obedience of the heart than all the imposing performances of ritualistic worship; and that our expiation from sin comes not to us as the result of an elaborate ceremonial, but as the effect of our great Substitute's obedience to the will of Jehovah.

7. "*Then said I.*" That is to say, when it was clearly seen that man's misery

could not be remedied by sacrifices and offerings. It being certain that the mere images of atonement, and the bare symbols of propitiation were of no avail, the Lord Jesus, *in propriâ personâ*, intervened. O blessed "then said I." Lord, ever give us to hear and feed on such living words as these, so peculiarly and personally thine own. "*Lo, I come.*" Behold, O heavens, and thou earth, and ye places under the earth! Here is something worthy of your intensest gaze. Sit ye down and watch with earnestness, for the invisible God comes in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an infant the Infinite hangs at a virgin's breast! Immanuel did not send but *come;* he came in his own personality, in all that constituted his essential self he came forth from the ivory palaces to the abodes of misery; he came promptly at the destined hour; he came with sacred alacrity as one freely offering himself. "*In the volume of the book it is written of me.*" In the eternal decree it is thus recorded. The mystic roll of predestination which providence gradually unfolds, contained within it, to the Saviour's knowledge, a written covenant, that in the fulness of time the divine I should descend to earth to accomplish a purpose which hecatombs of bullocks and rams could not achieve. What a privilege to find our names written in the book of life, and what an honour, since the name of Jesus heads the page! Our Lord had respect to his ancient covenant engagements, and herein he teaches us to be scrupulously just in keeping our word; have we so promised, is it so written in the book of remembrance? then let us never be defaulters.

8. "*I delight to do thy will, O my God.*" Our blessed Lord alone could completely do the will of God. The law is too broad for such poor creatures as we are to hope to fulfil it to the uttermost: but Jesus not only did the Father's will, but found a delight therein; from old eternity he had desired the work set before him; in his human life he was straitened till he reached the baptism of agony in which he magnified the law, and even in Gethsemane itself he chose the Father's will, and set aside his own. Herein is the essence of obedience, namely, in the soul's cheerful devotion to God: and our Lord's obedience, which is our righteousness, is in no measure lacking in this eminent quality. Notwithstanding his measureless griefs, our Lord found delight in his work, and for "the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." "*Yea, thy law is within my heart.*" No outward, formal devotion was rendered by Christ; his heart was in his work, holiness was his element, the Father's will his meat and drink. We must each of us be like our Lord in this, or we shall lack the evidence of being his disciples. Where there is no heart work, no pleasure, no delight in God's law, there can be no acceptance. Let the devout reader adore the Saviour for the spontaneous and hearty manner in which he undertook the great work of our salvation.

9. "*I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.*" The purest morality and the highest holiness were preached by Jesus. Righteousness divine was his theme. Our Lord's whole life was a sermon, eloquent beyond compare, and it is heard each day by myriads. Moreover, he never shunned in his ministry to declare the whole counsel of God; God's great plan of righteousness he plainly set forth. He taught openly in the temple, and was not ashamed to be a faithful and a true witness. He was the great evangelist; the master of itinerant preachers; the head of the clan of open-air missionaries. O servants of the Lord, hide not your lights, but reveal to others what your God has revealed to you; and especially by your lives testify for holiness, be champions for the right, both in word and deed. "*Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest.*" Never either from love of ease, or fear of men, did the Great Teacher's lips become closed. He was instant in season and out of season. The poor listened to him, and princes heard his rebuke; Publicans rejoiced at him, and Pharisees raged, but to them both he proclaimed the truth from heaven. It is well for a tried believer when he can appeal to God and call him to witness that he has not been ashamed to bear witness for him; for rest assured if we are not ashamed to confess our God, he will never be ashamed to own us. Yet what a wonder is here, that the Son of God should plead, just as we plead, and urge just

such arguments as would befit the mouths of his diligent ministers! How truly is he "made like unto his brethren."

10. "*I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart.*" On the contrary, "Never man spake like this man." God's divine plan of making men righteous was well known to him, and he plainly taught it. What was in our great Master's heart he poured forth in holy eloquence from his lips. The doctrine of righteousness by faith he spake with great simplicity of speech. Law and gospel equally found in him a clear expositor. "*I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation.*" Jehovah's fidelity to his promises and his grace in saving believers were declared by the Lord Jesus on many occasions, and are blessedly blended in the gospel which he came to preach. God, faithful to his own character, law and threatenings, and yet saving sinners, is a peculiar revelation of the gospel. God faithful to the saved ones evermore is the joy of the followers of Christ Jesus. "*I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*" The tender as well as the stern attributes of God, our Lord Jesus fully unveiled. Concealment was far from the Great Apostle of our profession. Cowardice he never exhibited, hesitancy never weakened his language. He who as a child of twelve years spake in the temple among the doctors, and afterwards preached to five thousand at Gennesaret, and to the vast crowds at Jerusalem on that great day, the last day of the feast, was always ready to proclaim the name of the Lord, and could never be charged with unholy silence. He could be dumb when so the prophecy demanded and patience suggested, but otherwise, preaching was his meat and his drink, and he kept back nothing which would be profitable to his disciples. This in the day of his trouble, according to this Psalm, he used as a plea for divine aid. He had been faithful to his God, and now begs the Lord to be faithful to him. Let every dumb professor, tongue-tied by sinful shame, bethink himself how little he will be able to plead after this fashion in the day of his distress.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.

17 But I *am* poor and needy; *yet* the Lord thinketh upon me: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

11. "*Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord.*" Alas! these were to be for awhile withheld from our Lord while on the accursed tree, but meanwhile in his great agony he seeks for gentle dealing; and the coming of the angel to strengthen him was a clear answer to his prayer. He had been blessed aforetime in the desert, and now at the entrance of the valley of the shadow of death, like a true, trustful, and experienced man, he utters a holy, plaintive desire for the tenderness of heaven. He had not withheld his testimony to God's truth, now in return he begs his Father not to withhold his compassion. This

verse might more correctly be read as a declaration of his confidence that help would not be refused ; but whether we view this utterance as the cry of prayer, or the avowal of faith, in either case it is instructive to us who take our suffering Lord for an example, and it proves to us how thoroughly he was made like unto his brethren. "*Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.*" He had preached both of these, and now he asks for an experience of them, that he might be kept in the evil day and rescued from his enemies and his afflictions. Nothing endears our Lord to us more than to hear him thus pleading with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save. O Lord Jesus, in our nights of wrestling we will remember thee.

12. "*For innumerable evils have compassed me about.*" On every side he was beset with evils ; countless woes environed the great Substitute for our sins. Our sins were innumerable, and so were his griefs. There was no escape for us from our iniquities, and there was no escape for him from the woes which we deserved. From every quarter evils accumulated about the blessed One, although in his heart evil found no place. "*Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.*" He had no sin, but sins were laid on him, and he took them as if they were his. "He was made sin for us." The transfer of sin to the Saviour was real, and produced in him as man the horror which forbade him to look into the face of God, bowing him down with crushing anguish and woe intolerable. O my soul, what would thy sins have done for thee eternally if the Friend of sinners had not condescended to take them all upon himself? Oh, blessed Scripture ! "The Lord hath made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all." Oh, marvellous depth of love, which could lead the perfectly immaculate to stand in the sinner's place, and bear the horror of great trembling which sin must bring upon those conscious of it. "*They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.*" The pains of the divine penalty were beyond compute, and the Saviour's soul was so burdened with them, that he was sore amazed, and very heavy even unto a sweat of blood. His strength was gone, his spirits sank, he was in an agony.

"Came at length the dreadful night.
Vengeance with its iron rod
Stood, and with collected might
Bruised the harmless Lamb of God,
See, my soul, thy Saviour see,
Prostrate in Gethsemane !

There my God bore all my guilt,
This through grace can be believed ;
But the horrors which he felt
Are too vast to be conceived.
None can penetrate through thee,
Doleful, dark Gethsemane

Sins against a holy God ;
Sins against his righteous laws ;
Sins against his love, his blood ;
Sins against his name and cause ;
Sins immense as is the sea—
Hide me, O Gethsemane ! "

13. "*Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.*" How touching ! How humble ! How plaintive ! The words thrill us as we think that after this sort our Lord and Master prayed. His petition is not so much that the cup should pass away undrained, but that he should be sustained while drinking it, and set free from its power at the first fitting moment. He seeks deliverance and help ; and he entreats that the help may not be slow in coming ; this is after the manner of our pleadings. Is it not? Note, reader, how our Lord was heard in that he feared, for there was after Gethsemane a calm endurance which made the fight as glorious as the victory.

14. "*Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it.*" Whether we read this as a prayer or a prophecy it matters not, for

the powers of sin, and death, and hell, may well be ashamed as they see the result of their malice for ever turned against themselves. It is to the infinite confusion of Satan that his attempts to destroy the Saviour destroyed himself; the diabolical conclave who plotted in council are now all alike put to shame, for the Lord Jesus has met them at all points, and turned all their wisdom into foolishness. "*Let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.*" It is even so; the hosts of darkness are utterly put to the rout, and made a theme for holy derision for ever and ever. How did they gloat over the thought of crushing the seed of the woman! but the Crucified has conquered, the Nazarene has laughed them to scorn, the dying Son of Man has become the death of death and hell's destruction. For ever blessed be his name.

15. "*Let them be desolate,*" or amazed; even as Jesus was desolate in his agony, so let his enemies be in their despair when he defeats them. The desolation caused in the hearts of evil spirits and evil men by envy, malice, chagrin, disappointment, and despair, shall be a fit recompense for their cruelty to the Lord when he was in their hands. "*For a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.*" Did the foul fiend insult over our Lord? Behold how shame is now his reward! Do wicked men to-day pour shame upon the name of the Redeemer? Their desolation shall avenge him of his adversaries! Jesus is the gentle Lamb to all who seek mercy through his blood; but let despisers beware, for he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and "who shall rouse him up?" The Jewish rulers exulted and scornfully said, "Aha, aha;" but when the streets of Jerusalem ran like rivers deep with gore, "and the temple was utterly consumed," then their house was left unto them desolate, and the blood of the last of the prophets, according to their own desire, came upon themselves and upon their children. O ungodly reader, if such a person glance over this page, beware of persecuting Christ and his people, for God will surely avenge his own elect. Your "ahas" will cost you dear. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.

16. "*Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee.*" We have done with Ebal and turn to Gerizim. Here our Lord pronounces benedictions on his people. Note who the blessed objects of his petitions are: not all men, but some men, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world." He pleads for seekers: the lowest in the kingdom, the babes of the family; those who have true desires, longing prayers, and consistent endeavours after God. Let seeking souls pluck up heart when they hear of this. What riches of grace, that in his bitterest hour Jesus should remember the lambs of the flock! And what does he entreat for them? it is that they may be doubly glad, intensely happy, emphatically joyful, for such the repetition of terms implies. Jesus would have all seekers made happy by finding what they seek after, and by winning peace through his grief. As deep as were his sorrows, so high would he have their joys. He groaned that we might sing, and was covered with a bloody sweat that we might be anointed with the oil of gladness. "*Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.*" Another result of the Redeemer's passion is the promotion of the glory of God by those who gratefully delight in his salvation. Our Lord's desire should be our directory; we love with all our hearts his great salvation, let us then, with all our tongues proclaim the glory of God which is resplendent therein. Never let his praises cease. As the heart is warm with gladness let it incite the tongue to perpetual praise. If we cannot do what we would for the spread of the kingdom, at least let us desire and pray for it. Be it ours to make God's glory the chief end of every breath and pulse. The suffering Redeemer regarded the consecration of his people to the service of heaven as a grand result of his atoning death; it is the joy which was set before him; that God is glorified is the reward of the Saviour's travail.

17. "*But I am poor and needy.*"—The man of sorrows closes with another appeal, based upon his affliction and poverty. "*Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.*" Sweet was this solace to the holy heart of the great sufferer. The Lord's thoughts of us are a cheering subject of meditation, for they are ever kind and

never cease. His disciples forsook him, and his friends forgat him, but Jesus knew that Jehovah never turned away his heart from him, and this upheld him in the hour of need. "*Thou art my help and my deliverer.*" His unmoved confidence stayed itself alone on God. O that all believers would imitate more fully their great Apostle and High Priest in his firm reliance upon God, even when afflictions abounded and the light was veiled. "*Make no tarrying, O my God.*" The peril was imminent, the need urgent, the suppliant could not endure delay, nor was he made to wait, for the angel came to strengthen, and the brave heart of Jesus rose up to meet the foe.

Lord Jesus, grant that in all our adversities we may possess like precious faith, and be found like thee, more than conquerors.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—David's Psalm, or, *a Psalm of David;* but David's name is here set first, which elsewhere commonly is last: or, *A Psalm concerning David,* that is, *Christ,* who is called *David* in the prophets: Hos. iii. 5; Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, and xxxii. 24. Of him this Psalm entreateth as the apostle teacheth, Heb. x. 5, 6, etc.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Whole Psalm.—It is plain, from verses 6—8 of this Psalm, compared with Heb. x. 5, that the prophet in speaking in the person of Christ, who, 1—5, celebrateth the deliverance wrought for his mystical body, the church, by his resurrection from the grave, effecting that of his members from the guilt and dominion of sin; for the abolition of which he declareth, 6—8, the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and mentioneth his own inclination to do the will of his Father, and 9, 10, to preach righteousness to the world. 11—13. He representeth himself as praying, while under his sufferings, for his own, and his people's salvation; he foretelleth, 14, 15, the confusion and desolation of his enemies, and, 16, the joy and thankfulness of his disciples and servants; for the speedy accomplishment of which, 17, he preferreth a petition.—*George Horne.*

Verse 1.—"*I waited patiently for the Lord: and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*" I see that the Lord, suppose he drifteth and delayeth the effect of his servant's prayer, and granteth not his desire at the first, yet he heareth him. I shall give a certain argument, whereby thou may know that the Lord heareth thee, suppose he delay the effect of thy prayers. Continuest thou in prayer? Hast thou his strength given thee to persevere in suiting* anything? Thou may be assured he heareth; for this is one sure argument that he heareth thee, for naturallie our impatience carrieth us to desperation; our suddenness is so great, speciallie in spiritual troubles, that we cannot continue in suiting. When thou, therefore, continues in suiting, thou may be sure that this strength is furnished of God, and cometh from heaven, and if thou have strength, he letteth thee see that he heareth thy prayer; and suppose he delay the effect and force thereof, yet pray continuallie. This doctrine is so necessary for the troubled conscience, that I think it is the meetest bridle in the Scripture to refrain our impatience; it is the meetest bit to hold us in continual exercise of patience; for if the heart understand that the Lord hath rejected our prayer altogether, it is not possible to continue in prayer; so when we know that the Lord heareth us, suppose he delay, let us crave patience to abide his good will.—*Robert Bruce,* 1559—1631.

Verse 1.—"*I waited for the Lord.*" The infinitive קוֹה being placed first brings the action strongly out: *I waited.* This strong emphasis on the

* Petitioning for or praying for.

waiting, has the force of an *admonition;* it suggests to the sufferer that everything depends on *waiting.—E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 1.—"*I waited patiently:*" rather *anxiously;* the original has it, *waiting I waited;* a Hebraism, which signifies vehement solicitude.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 1.—"*I waited.*" The Saviour endureth his sufferings *waitingly*, as well as patiently and prayerfully. He "waited for the Lord." He expected help from Jehovah; and he waited for it until it came.—*James Frame, in "Christ and his Work: an Exposition of Psalm XL."* 1869.

Verse 1.—"*Patiently.*" Our Lord's patience under suffering was an element of perfection in his work. Had he become impatient as we often do, and lost heart, his atonement would have been vitiated. Well may we rejoice that in the midst of all his temptations, and in the thickest of the battle against sin and Satan, he remained patient and willing to finish the work which his Father had given him to do.—*James Frame.*

Verse 1.—"*Heard my cry.*" Our Saviour endured his sufferings *prayerfully* as well as *patiently.—James Frame.*

Verse 2.—"*An horrible pit.*" Some of the pits referred to in the Bible were prisons, one such I saw at Athens, and another at Rome. To these there were no openings, except a hole at the top, which served for both door and window. The bottoms of these pits were necessarily in a filthy and revolting state, and sometimes deep in mud. "*He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay;*" one of these filthy prisons being in the psalmist's view, in Isaiah xxxviii. 17, called "the pit of corruption," or putrefaction and filth.—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 2.—"*An horrible pit;*" or, as it is in the Hebrew, *a pit of noise;* so called because of waters that falling into it with great violence, make a roaring dreadful noise; or because of the strugglings and outcries they make that are in it; or because when anything is cast into deep pits, it will always make a great noise; and where he stuck fast in "*miry clay,*" without seeming possibility of getting out. And some refer this to the greatness of Christ's terrors and sufferings, and his deliverance from them both.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 2.—Three things are stated in verse two. First, resurrection as the act of God, "*He brought me up,*" etc. Secondly, the justification of the name and title of the Sufferer, "*and set my feet upon a rock.*" Jesus is set up, as alive from the dead, upon the basis of accomplished truth. Thirdly, there is his ascension, "*He establisheth my goings.*" The Son of God having trodden, in gracious and self-renouncing obedience the passage to the grave, now enters finally as Man the path of life. "He is gone into heaven," says the Spirit. And again, "He ascended on high, and led captivity captive."—*Arthur Pridham in "Notes and Reflections on the Psalms,"* 1869.

Verse 3.—"*A new song.*" See Notes on Psalm xxxiii. verse 3.

Verse 3.—"*Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*" The terms *fear*, and *hope*, or *trust*, do not seem at first view to harmonise; but David has not improperly joined them together, for no man will ever entertain the *hope* of the favour of God but he whose mind is first imbued with the *fear* of God. I understand *fear*, in general, to mean the feeling of piety which is produced in us by the knowledge of the power, equity, and mercy of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 3.—"*Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*" First of all they "*see.*" Their eyes are opened; and their opened eyes see and survey *what* they are, *where* they are, *whence* they came, and *whither* they are going. . . . . When the attention of sinners is really and decisively arrested by the propitiation of Jesus, not only are their eyes opened to their various moral relations, not only do they "see" but they "*fear*" too. They "see" and "fear." . . . . . Conviction follows illumination. . . . . But while the sinner only sees and fears, he is but in the initial stage of conversion, only in a

state of readiness to flee from the city of destruction. He may have set out on his pilgrimage, but he has not yet reached his Father to receive the kiss of welcome and forgiveness. The consummating step has not yet been taken. He has seen indeed; he has feared too; but he still requires to *trust*, to trust in the Lord, and banish all his fears. This is the culminating point in the great change; and, unless this be reached, the other experiences will either die away, like an untimely blossom, or they will only be fuel to the unquenchable fire.—*James Frame.*

Verse 5.—"*Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done,*" etc. Behold God in the magnificence and wisdom of the works which his hands have made, even this immense universe, which is full of his glory. What art and contrivance! What regularity, harmony, and proportion, are to be seen in all his productions, in the frame of our own bodies, or those that are about us! And with what beams of majestic glory do the sun, moon, and stars proclaim how august and wonderful in knowledge their Maker is! And ought not all these numberless beauties wherewith the world is stored, which the minds of inquisitive men are ready to admire, lead up our thoughts to the great Parent of all things, and inflame our amorous souls with love to him, who is infinitely brighter and fairer than them all?

Cast abroad your eyes through the nations, and meditate on the mighty acts which he hath done, and the wisdom and power of his providence, which should charm all thy affections. Behold his admirable patience, with what pity he looks down on obstinate rebels; and how he is moved with compassion when he sees his creatures polluted in their blood, and bent upon their own destruction; how long he waits to be gracious; how unwillingly he appears to give up with sinners, and execute deserved vengeance on his enemies; and then with what joy he pardons, for "with him is plenteous redemption." And what can have more force than these to win thy esteem, and make a willing conquest of thy heart? so that every object about thee is an argument of love, and furnishes fuel for this sacred fire. And whether you behold God in the firmament of his power, or the sanctuary of his grace, you cannot miss to pronounce him "altogether lovely."—*William Dunlop.*

Verse 5.—"*Thy thoughts which are to us-ward, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee:*" *i.e.*, there is no one can digest them in order; for although that may be attempted according to the comprehension and meaning of men, yet *not before thee*, every attempt of that nature being infinitely beneath thy immeasurable glory.—*Victorinus Bythner's "Lyre of David;" translated by T. Dee: new edition, by N. L. Benmohel,* 1847.

Verse 5.—"*Us-ward.*" It is worthy of notice that while addressing his Father, as Jehovah and his God, our Saviour speaks of the members of the human family as his fellows. This is implied in the expressions "to us-ward." He regarded himself as most intimately associated with the children of men.—*James Frame.*

Verse 5.—"*They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.*" They are "in order" in themselves, and if they could be "reckoned up" as they are, they would be "reckoned in order." Created mind may not be able to grasp the principle of order that pervades them, but such a principle there is. And the more we study the whole series in its interrelations, the more shall we be convinced that as to time and place all the preparations for the mediatorial work of Christ, all the parts of its accomplishment, and all the divinely appointed consequents of its acceptation throughout all time into eternity, are faultlessly in order; they are precisely what and where and when they should be.—*James Frame.*

Verse 5.—"*They are more than can be numbered.*" The pulses of Providence are quicker than those of our wrists or temples. The soul of David knew right well their multiplicity, but could not multiply them aright by any skill in arithmetic; nay, the very sum or chief heads of divine kindnesses were innu-

merable. His "wonderful works" and "thoughts" towards him could not be reckoned up in order by him, they were *more than could be numbered.—Samuel Lee* (1625—1691), *in "The Triumph of Mercy in the Chariot of Praise."*

Verse 5.—It is Christ's speech, of whom the Psalm is made, and that relating unto his Father's resolved purposes and contrivements from eternity, and those continued unto his sending Christ into the world to die for us, as verses 6, 7. It follows so, as although his thoughts and purposes were but one individual act at first, and never to be altered; yet they became many, through a perpetuated reiteration of them, wherein his constancy to himself is seen. . . . . My brethren, if God have been thinking thoughts of mercy from everlasting to those that are his, what a stock and treasury do these thoughts arise to, besides those that are in his nature and disposition! This is in his actual purposes and intentions, which he hath thought, and doth think over, again and again, every moment. "*Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward,*" saith Jesus Christ; for Psalm xl. is a Psalm of Christ, and quoted by the apostle, and applied unto Christ in Heb. x., "*How many are thy thoughts* to us-ward!"—he speaks it in the name of the human nature—that is, to me and mine. "*If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*" And what is the reason? Because God hath studied mercies, mercies for his children, even from everlasting. And then, "He reneweth his mercies every morning;" not that any mercies are new, but he actually thinketh over mercies again and again, and so he brings out of his treasury, mercies both new and old, and the old are always new. What a stock, my brethren, must this needs amount unto!—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 6.—"*Sacrifice and offering . . . . . burnt-offering and sin-offering.*" Four kinds are here specified, both by the psalmist and apostle: namely, *sacrifice*, זֶבַח *zebhach*, θυσία; *offering*, מִנְחָה *minchah*, προσφορὰ; *burnt-offering*, עוֹלָה *olah*, ὁλοκαύτωμα; *sin-offering*, חַטָּאָה *chataah*, περὶ ἁμαρτίας. Of all these we may say with the apostle, it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, etc., should take away sin.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*Mine ears hast thou opened.*" The literal translation is, *mine ears hast thou digged* (or *pierced*) *through;* which may well be interpreted as meaning, "Thou hast accepted me as thy slave," in allusion to the custom (Exod. xxi. 6) of masters boring the ear of a slave, who had refused his offered freedom, in token of retaining him.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 6.—John Calvin, in treating upon the interpretation, "mine ears hast thou bored," says, "this mode of interpretation appears to be too forced and refined."

Verse 6.—"*Mine ears hast thou opened.*" If it be said that the apostle to the Hebrews read this differently, I answer, this does not appear to me. It is true, he found a different, but corrupted translation (*ὠτία, ears*, as the learned have observed, having been changed into *σῶμα, body*) in the LXX, which was the version then in use; and he was obliged to quote it as he found it, under the penalty, if he altered it, of being deemed a false quoter. He therefore took the translation as he found it, especially as it served to illustrate his argument equally well. Upon this quotation from the LXX the apostle argues, verse 9, "He (Christ) taketh away the first (namely, legal sacrifices), that he may establish the second" (namely, obedience to God's will), in offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of mankind: and thus he must have argued upon a quotation from the Hebrew text as it stands at present.—*Green, quoted in S. Burder's "Scripture Expositor."*

Verse 6.—The apostle's reading (Heb. x. 5), though it be far distant from the letter of the Hebrew, and in part from the LXX (as I suppose it to have been originally), yet is the most perspicuous interpretation of the meaning of it: *Christ's body* comprehended the *ears*, and that assumed on purpose to perform

in it the utmost degree of obedience to the will of God, to be obedient even to death, and thereby to be as the priest.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 6.—

> Nor sacrifice thy love can win,
> Nor offerings from the stain of sin
> Obnoxious man shall clear:
> Thy hand my mortal frame prepares,
> (Thy hand, whose signature it bears,)
> And opes my willing ear.
>
> *James Merrick, M.A.*, 1720—1769.

Verses 6, 7.—In these words an allusion is made to a custom of the Jews *to bore the ears* of such as were to be their perpetual servants, and *to enrol their names in a book*, or make some instrument of the covenant. "Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not have;" but because I am thy vowed servant, bored with an awl, and enrolled in thy book, "*I said, Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God.*" These words of the Psalm are alleged by S. Paul, Heb. x. But the first of them with a most strange difference. For whereas the psalmist hath, according to the Hebrew verity, "*Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not: mine ears thou hast bored or digged,*" אָזְנָיִת; S. Paul reads with the LXX, σῶμα κατηρτίσω μοι, "*A body thou hast prepared* or *fitted me.*" What equipollency can be in sense between these two? This difficulty is so much the more augmented because most interpreters make the life of the quotation to lie in those very words where the difference is, namely, That the words, "*A body thou hast prepared* me," are brought by the apostle to prove our Saviour's incarnation; whereunto the words in the Psalm itself ("*Mine ears hast thou bored*, or *digged*, or *opened*"), take them how you will, will in no wise suit. I answer, therefore, That the life of the quotation lies not in the words of difference, nor can do, because this epistle was written to the Hebrews, and so first in the Hebrew tongue, where this translation of the LXX could have no place. And if the life of the quotation lay here, I cannot see how it can possibly be reconciled. It lies therefore in the words where there is no difference, namely, That Christ was such a High Priest as came to sanctify us, not with legal offerings and sacrifices, but by his obedience in doing like a devoted servant the will of his Father. Thus, the allegation will not depend at all upon the words of difference, and so they give us liberty to reconcile them: "*Mine ears hast thou bored,*" saith the psalmist, *i.e.*, Thou hast accepted me for a perpetual servant, as masters are wont, according to the law, to *bore* such servants' *ears* as refuse to part from them. Now the LXX, according to whom the apostle's epistle readeth, thinking perhaps the meaning of this speech would be obscure to such as knew not that custom, chose rather to translate it generally σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι, "*Thou hast fitted my body,*" namely, to be thy servant, in such a manner as servants' bodies are wont to be. And so the sense is all one, though not specified to the Jewish custom of boring the ear with an awl, but left indifferently appliable to the custom of any nation in marking and stigmatising their servants' bodies.—*Joseph Mede, B.D.*, 1586—1638.

Verses 6—10.—Here we have in Christ for our instruction, and in David also (his type) for our example; 1. A firm purpose of obedience, in a *bored ear*, and a yielding heart. 2. A ready performance thereof: "*Lo, I come.*" 3. A careful observance of the word written: "*In the volume of the Book it is written of me,*" verse 7. 4. A hearty delight in that observance, verse 8. 5. A public profession and communication of God's goodness to others, verses 9, 10. Now, we should labour to express Christ to the world, to walk as he walked (1 John ii. 6): our lives should be in some sense parallel with his life, as the transcript with the original: he left us a copy to write by, saith St. Peter, 1st Epistle ii. 21.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 7.—"*Then said I, Lo, I come.*" As his name is above every name, so this coming of his is above every coming. We sometimes call our own births, I

confess, a coming into the world ; but properly, none ever came into the world but he. For, 1. He only truly can be said to come, who is before he comes ; so were not we, only he so. 2. He only strictly comes who comes willingly ; our crying and struggling at our entrance into the world, shows how unwillingly we come into it. He alone it is that sings out, "*Lo, I come.*" 3. He only properly comes who comes from some place or other. Alas ! we had none to come from but the womb of nothing. *He* only had a place to be in before he came.—*Mark Frank.*

Verse 7.—"*Then said I, Lo, I come,*" to wit, as surety, to pay the ransom, and to do thy will, O God. Every word carrieth a special emphasis as, 1. The time, "*then,*" even so soon as he perceived that his Father had prepared his body for such an end, then, without delay. This speed implieth forwardness and readiness ; he would lose no opportunity. 2. His profession in this word, "*said I ;*" he did not closely, secretly, timorously, as being ashamed thereof, but he maketh profession beforehand. 3. This note of observation, "*Lo,*" this is a kind of calling angels and men to witness, and a desire that all might know his inward intention, and the disposition of his heart ; wherein was as great a willingness as any could have to anything. 4. An offering of himself without any enforcement or compulsion ; this he manifesteth in this word, "*I come.*" 5. That very instant set out in the present tense, "*I come ;*" he puts it not off to a future and uncertain time, but even in that moment, he saith, "*I come.*" 6. The first person twice expressed, thus, "*I said,*" "*I come.*" He sendeth not another person, nor substituteth any in his room ; but he, even he himself in his own person, cometh. All which do abundantly evidence Christ's singular readiness and willingness, as our surety, to do his Father's will, though it were by suffering, and by being made a sacrifice for our sins.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 7.—"*Lo, I come,*" *i.e.*, to appear before thee ; a phrase used to indicate the coming of an inferior into the presence of a superior, or of a slave before his master, Num. xxii. 38 ; 2 Sam. xix. 20 : as in the similar expression, "Behold, here I am," generally expressive of willingness.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 7.—"*Lo, I come.*" Christ's coming in the spirit is a *joyful* coming. I think this, "*Lo, I come,*" expresses, 1. *Present* joy. 2. It expresses *certain* joy : the "*Lo,*" is a note of certainty ; the thing is certain and true ; and his joy is certain ; certain, true, solid joy. 3. It expresses *communicative* joy ; designing his people shall share of his joy, "*Lo, I come !*" The joy that Christ has as Mediator is a fulness of joy, designed for his people's use, that *out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace,* and joy for joy ; grace answering grace in Jesus, and joy answering joy in him. 4. It expresses *solemn* joy. He comes with a solemnity ; "*Lo, I come !*" according to the council of a glorious Trinity. Now, when the purpose of heaven is come to the birth, and the decree breaks forth, and the fulness of time is come, he makes heaven and earth witness, as it were, to his solemn march on the errand : he says it with a loud, "*Lo !*" that all the world of men and angels may notice, "*Lo, I come !*" And, indeed, all the elect angels brake forth into joyful songs of praise at this solemnity ; when he came in the flesh, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill towards man."—*Ralph Erskine,* 1685—1752.

Verse 7.—"*Lo, I come,*" or, *am come,* to wit, *into the world* (Heb. x. 5), and particularly *to Jerusalem,* to give myself a sacrifice for sin.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 7.—"*The volume of the book.*" What book is meant, whether the Scripture, or the book of life, is not certain, probably the latter.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 7.—"*The volume of the book.*" But what volume of manuscript roll is here meant ? Plainly, the one which was already extant when the psalmist was writing. If the psalmist was David himself (as the title of the Psalm seems to affirm), the only parts of the Hebrew Scriptures then extant, and of course, the only part to which he could refer, must have been the Pentateuch, and perhaps the book of Joshua. Beyond any reasonable doubt, then, the κεφαλὶς βιβλίον (מְגִלַּת סֵפֶר) was the Pentateuch. . . . But I apprehend the meaning of the

writer to be, that the *book of the law*, which prescribes sacrifices that were merely σκιαὶ or παραβολαὶ of the great atoning sacrifice by Christ, did itself teach, by the use of these, that something of a higher and better nature was to be looked for than Levitical rites. In a word, it pointed to the Messiah ; or, some of the contents of the *written* law had respect to him.—*Moses Stuart, M.A., in "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews,"* 1851.

Verse 7.—"*The volume of the book,*" etc. When I first considered Rom. v. 14, and other Scriptures in the New Testament which make the first Adam, and the whole story of him both before and after, and in his sinning or falling, to be the type and lively shadow of Christ, the second Adam ; likewise observing that the apostle Paul stands admiring at the greatest of this mystery or mystical type, the Christ, the second Adam should so wonderfully be shadowed forth therein, as Eph. v. 32, he cries out, "This is a great mystery," which he speaks applying and fitting some passages about Adam and Eve unto Christ and his church ; it made me more to consider an interpretation of a passage in Heb. x. 7, out of Psalm xl. 7, which I before had not only not regarded, but wholly rejected, as being too like a postil * gloss. The passage is, that "when Christ came into the world," to take our nature on him, he alleged the reason of it to be the fulfilling of a Scripture written in "the beginning of God's book," ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου, so out of the original the words may be, and are by many interpreters, translated, though our translation reads them only thus, "*In the volume of the book it is written of me.*" It is true, indeed, that in the fortieth Psalm, whence they are quoted, the words in the Hebrew may signify no more than that in God's book (the manner of writing which was anciently in rolls of parchment, folded up in a volume) Christ was everywhere written and spoken of. Yet the word κεφαλὶς, which out of the Septuagint's translation the apostle took, signifying, as all know, the beginning of a book ; and we finding such an emphasis set by the apostle in the fifth chapter of the Ephesians, upon the history of Adam in the beginning of Genesis, as containing the mystery, yea, the great mystery about Christ, it did somewhat induce, though not so fully persuade, me to think, that the Holy Ghost in those words might have some glance at the story of Adam in the first of the first book of Moses. And withal the rather because so, the words so understood do intimate a higher and further inducement to Christ to assume our nature, the scope of the speech, Heb. x., being to render the reason why he so willingly took man's nature : not only because God liked not sacrifice and burnt-offering, which came in but upon occasion of sin, and after the fall, and could not take sins away, but further, that he was prophesied of, and his assuming a body prophetically foresignified, as in the fortieth Psalm, so even by Adam's story before the fall, recorded in the very beginning of Genesis, which many other Scriptures do expressly apply it unto.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8.—"*I delight to do thy will, O my God.*" The will of God to redeem sinners by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, was most grateful and pleasing to the very heart of Christ. It is said, Prov. viii. 31, when he was solacing himself in the sweetest enjoyment of his Father, whilst he lay in that blessed bosom of delights, yet the very prospect of this work gave him pleasure, then his "delights were with the sons of men." And when he was come into the world, and had endured many abuses and injuries, and was even now come to the most difficult part of the work ; yet, "how am I straitened, or pained (saith he), till it be accomplished !" Luke xii. 50. Two things call our thoughts to stay upon them in this point. First.—The *decency* of it—why it ought to be so. 1.—It became Christ to go about this work with cheerfulness and delight, that thereby he might give his death the nature and formality of a sacrifice. In all sacrifices you shall find that God had still a regard, a special respect to the will of the offerer. See Exod. xxxv.

* A marginal note.

5, 21, and Levit. i. 3. 2.—It ought to be so in view of the unity of Christ's will with the Father's. 3.—This was necessary to commend the love of Jesus Christ to us for whom he gave himself. That he came into the world to die for us is a mercy of the first magnitude; but that he came in love to our souls, and underwent all his sufferings with such willingness for our sakes, this heightens it above all apprehension. 4.—It was necessary to be so for the regulating of all our obedience to God, according to this pattern; that seeing and setting this great example of obedience before us, we might never grudge nor grumble at any duty or suffering that God should call us to. *Secondly.*—Let us consider and examine whence it came to be so pleasant and acceptable to Jesus Christ, to come into the world and die for poor sinners. 1.—That in his sufferings there would be made a glorious display and manifestation of the divine attributes. 2.—Another delightful prospect Christ had of the fruit of his sufferings, was the recovery and salvation of all the elect by his death; and though his sufferings were exceedingly bitter, yet such fruit of them as this was exceedingly sweet. 3.—Add to this, the glory which would redound to him from his redeemed ones to all eternity, for it will be the everlasting employment of the saints in heaven to be ascribing glory, praise, and honour to the Redeemer. Did Christ find pleasure in abasement and torment, in suffering and dying for me, and can I find no pleasure in praying, hearing, meditating, and enjoying the sweet duties of communion with him? Did he come so cheerfully to die for me, and do I go so dead-heartedly to prayers and sacraments to enjoy fellowship with him? Was it a pleasure to him to shed his blood, and is it none to me to apply it, and reap the benefits of it? O let there be no more grumblings, lazy excuses, shiftings of duty, or dead-hearted and listless performances of them, after such an example as this. Be ready to do the will of God, be ye also ready to suffer it. And as to sufferings for Christ, they should not be grievous to Christians that know how cheerfully Christ came from the bosom of the Father to die for them. What have we to leave or lose, in comparison with him? What are our sufferings to Christ's? Alas! there is no compare; there was more bitterness in one drop of his sufferings than in a sea of ours. To conclude: your delight and readiness in the paths of obedience is the very measure of your sanctification.—*Condensed from John Flavel.*

Verse 8.—Now, saith Christ, "*I delight to do thy will, O my God;*" it is the joy and rejoicing of my heart to be a-seeking and a-saving lost sinners. When Christ was an hungry, he went not into a victualling house but into the temple, and taught the people most part of the day, to show how much he delighted in the salvation of sinners, etc. Christ did so much delight, and his heart was so much set upon the conversion and salvation of the Samaritans, that he neglected his own body to save their souls, as you may clearly see in John iv.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 8.—"*To do.*" It was Jesus who was the doer of the work. The Father willed it; but he did not do it. It was Jesus who did it, who wrought it out; who brought it in; who carried it within the veil, and laid it as an acceptable and meritorious offering at the feet of his well-pleased Father. The work then is done; it is finished. We need not attempt to do it. We cannot do it. We cannot do that which is already done; and we could not do it, though it were yet undone. There is much that man can do, but he cannot make a propitiation.—*James Frame.*

Verse 8.—"*Thy will.*" The covenant between the Father and the Son, as elsewhere, so it is most clearly expressed (Heb. x. 7, from Ps. xl. 7, 8), "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." And what will? Verse 10, "The will by which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." The will of God was, that Jesus should be offered; and to this end, that we might be sanctified and saved. It is called "The offering of the body of Jesus Christ," in answer to what was said before, "A body hast thou prepared me," or a

human nature, by a synecdoche. "My will," says God the Father, "is that thou have a body, and that thy body be offered up: and all to this end, that the children, the elect, might be sanctified." Says the Son to this, "Lo, I come to do thy will;"—"I accept of the condition, and give up myself to the performance of thy will."—*John Owen.*

Verse 8.—"*Thy law is within my heart.*" The law of God is not to be kept in books, but in the midst of our heart, that we may rightly understand the same, admire it, and observe it.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 8.—"*Thy law is within my heart.*" The will of God in which Christ delighted, was (as appears by the coherence, and the quotation of Heb. x. 5) that Christ should make his soul an offering for sin, as more acceptable to God than all other burnt-offerings and sin-offerings. This law was *in his heart*, בְּתוֹךְ מֵעָי, in the midst of his bowels. He did as much delight in it as we do in following those inclinations which nature has implanted in our hearts, as we do in eating and drinking. So he expresses it (John iv. 34), "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." He was as willing to bleed and die for thee as thou art to eat when hungry. He was delighted as much to be scourged, wounded, crucified, as thou delightest in meat when most delicious.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 8.—"*Within my heart*," margin, *my bowels.* The intestines or viscera are here mentioned as the place of the most profound spiritual occupation.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 9.—"*I have preached righteousness*," etc. It is Jesus who speaks, and he speaks of himself as a PREACHER. He was a preacher, and a great preacher too. He was great—1. In *genuine eloquence.* All the handmaids of the choicest rhetoric ministered to him as he spake. His mind touched the minds of his auditors on all sides. 2. He was great in *knowledge.* Many who have an astonishing command of words, and who can use their words with astonishing rhetorical adroitness, spoil their influence by their "lack of knowledge." They go blunderingly onward when they attempt to think for themselves, or to guide their hearers into fields of thought which have not been tracked by minds of the pioneer order. 3. He was great also in *goodness.* There is a greatness in goodness, and the greatness of goodness is an important element in the greatness of a preacher. 4. Jesus was great, too, in *official status.* Official status, whether in things civil, literary, or sacred, when conferred on worthy individuals, confers, in its turn, undoubted weight and moral authority. Now Jesus was the highest official in the universe. His authority extended to all other office-bearers, his office exceeded all other offices. He came from above, and was "above all." He was Lord of lords, and King of kings. 5. Another element still in the greatness of Jesus, as a preacher, consisted in the greatness of his *essential dignity.* He was God as well as man. Such was Christ as a preacher. True he was more than a preacher; he was likewise a pattern, and a priest, and a propitiator; and as pattern, priest, and propitiator, he stands without a peer. But he was a preacher, too, and as a preacher, he has never had, and never will have an equal.—*Condensed from James Frame.*

Verse 9.—"*The great congregation.*" The "*congregation*" here referred to was "*great*" not only in *numbers*, but "*great*" also in the necessities of its individual members, and great in *pollution.*—*James Frame.*

Verses 9, 10.—"*I have published . . . . I would not refrain . . . . I have not covered . . . . I have uttered . . . . I have not hid:*" words are heaped upon words to express the eager forwardness of a heart burning to show forth its gratitude. No elaborate description could so well have given us the likeness of one whose "life was a thanksgiving."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 9, 10.—The true way of justification of sinners by faith is a jewel so precious and necessary for poor souls, that it should not be concealed: "*I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart.*" One sermon on this subject is not sufficient; it is necessary to make this mystery plain, how by faith in Christ

the man that flieth to him is justified from his sins, and saved according to the covenant passed between the suffering Mediator and God the faithful promiser, to justify and save by his own way. "*I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verses 9, 10.—"*Thy.*" The adding *thy* to every one of them is emphatical; it was *thy* righteousness I had commission to declare, *thy* faithfulness I had order to proclaim, *thy* mercy I had charge to publish; *thou* wert as much interested in all that I did as I myself was. I shall be counted false and a liar, thou wilt be counted unjust and cruel, if all be not fulfilled as I have spoken. Since it was thy rule I observed, and thy glory I aimed at in declaring it, disgrace not thyself and me in refusing the petition of such a suppliant, who believes in my word which I gave out by thy authority.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 10.—"*I have not hid.*" This intimates, that whoever undertook to preach the gospel of Christ would be in great temptation to hide it, and conceal it, because it must be preached with great contention, and in the face of great opposition.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 10.—"*I have not hid,*" etc. What God has done for us, or for the church, we should lay *to* heart; but not lock up *in* our heart.—*Carl Bernhard Moll in Lange's "Bibelwerk."* 1869.

Verse 11.—"*Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me.*" Do not hinder them from coming showering down upon me. "*Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me;*" or, do thou employ them in preserving me.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 12.—"*For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head.*" We lose ourselves when we speak of the sins of our lives. It may astonish any considering man to take notice how many sins he is guilty of any one day; how many sins accompany any one single act; nay, how many bewray themselves in any one religious duty. Whensoever ye do anything forbidden, you omit the duty at that time commanded; and whenever you neglect that which is enjoined, the omission is joined with the acting of something forbidden; so that the sin, whether omission or commission, is always double; nay, the apostle makes every sin tenfold. James ii. 10. That which seems one to us, according to the sense of the law, and the account of God, is multiplied by ten. He breaks every command by sinning directly against one, and so sins ten times at once; besides that swarm of sinful circumstances and aggravations which surround every act in such numbers, as atoms use to surround your body in a dusty room; you may more easily number these than those. And though some count these but fractions, incomplete sins, yet even from hence it is more difficult to take an account of their number. And, which is more for astonishment, pick out the best religious duty that ever you performed, and even in that performance you may find such a swarm of sins as cannot be numbered. In the best prayer that ever you put up to God, irreverence, lukewarmness, unbelief, spiritual pride, self-seeking, hypocrisy, distractions, etc., and many more, that an enlightened soul grieves and bewails; and yet there are many more that the pure eye of God discerns, than any man does take notice of.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 12.—"*Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me.*" They seized him as the sinner's substitute, to deal with him as regards their own penalty, according to the sinner's desert.—*James Frame.*

Verse 13.—The remaining verses of this Psalm are almost exactly identical with Psalm LXX.

Verse 14.—"*Let them be ashamed and confounded,*" etc. Even this prayer carried benevolence in its bosom. It sought from the divine Father, such a

manifestation of what was glorious and God-like as might unnerve each rebel arm, and overawe each rebel heart in the traitor's company. If each arm were for a little unnerved, if each heart were for a little unmanned, there might be time for the better principles of their nature to rise and put an arrest upon the prosecution of their wicked design. Such being the benevolent aim of the prayer, we need not wonder that it issued from the same heart that by-and-by exclaimed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" neither need we marvel that it was answered to the very letter, and that as soon as he said to the traitor band, "I am he," they went backward and fell to the ground. —*James Frame.*

Verse 15.—"*Aha, aha.*" An exclamation which occurs three times in the Psalms; and in each case there seems to be reference to the mockery at the Passion. See xxxv. 21; and lxx. 3, which appear to belong to the same time as the present Psalm.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 16.—"*Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.*" As every mercy to every believer giveth a proof of God's readiness to show the like mercy to all believers, when they stand in need; so should every mercy shown to any of the number, being known to the rest, be made the matter and occasion of magnifying the Lord.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 16.—"*Such as love thy salvation.*" To love God's salvation is to love God himself, the Saviour, or Jesus.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 16.—"*Such as love thy salvation.*" One would think that self-love alone should make us love salvation. Ay, but they love it because it is his, "that love *thy* salvation." It is the character of a holy saint to love salvation itself; not as his own only, but as God's, as God's that saves him.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 16.—"*Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.*" Jesus who gave us our capacity of happiness and our capacity of speaking, realised the relation which he had established between them; and hence in praying for his friends, he prayed that in the joy and gladness of their souls they might *say*, "The Lord be magnified." He desired them to speak of their holy happiness; and it was his wish that when they did speak of it they should speak in terms of laudation of Jehovah, for he was the source of it. He desired them to say continually, "*The Lord be magnified.*"—*James Frame.*

Verse 17.—In Dr. Malan's memoir, the editor, one of his sons, thus writes of his brother Jocelyn, who was for some years prior to his death, the subject of intense bodily sufferings:—"One striking feature in his character was his holy fear of God, and reverence for his will. One day I was repeating a verse from the Psalms, '*As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me: thou art my helper and deliverer; O Lord, make no long tarrying.*' He said, 'Mamma, I love that verse, all but the last bit, it looks like a murmur against God. He never 'tarries' in my case.'"—*From "The Life, Labours, and Writings of Cæsar Malan* (1787—1864)*: By one of his sons,*" 1869.

Verse 17.—"*Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.*" Sacred story derives from heaven the kindness of Abimelech to Abraham, of Laban and Esau to Jacob, of Ruth to Naomi, of Boaz to Ruth, and Jonathan to David. When others think of kindness to us, let us imitate David, 'tis the Lord that thinketh upon me, and forms those thoughts within their hearts. This should calm our spirits when a former friend's heart is alienated by rash admissions of false suggestions, or when any faithful Jonathan expires his spirit into the bosom of God. It should not be lost what Hobson, the late noted carrier of Cambridge, said to a young student receiving a letter of the sad tidings of his uncle's decease (who maintained him at the University), and weeping bitterly, and reciting the cause of his grief, he replied, *Who gave you that friend?* Which saying did greatly comfort him, and was a sweet support to him afterwards in his ministry. The

Everliving God is the portion of a living faith, and *he* can never want that hath *such* an ocean. He that turns the hearts of kings like rivers at his pleasure, turns all the little brooks in the world into what scorched and parched ground he pleases.—*Samuel Lee.*

Verse 17.—"*The Lord thinketh upon me.*" There are three things in *God's thinking upon us*, that are solacing and delightful. Observe the *frequency* of his thoughts. Indeed, they are incessant. You have a friend, whom you esteem and love. You wish to live in his mind. You say when you part, and when you write, "Think of me." You give him, perhaps, a token to revive his remembrance. How naturally is Selkirk, in his solitary island, made to say :—

"My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a *thought* after me?
O tell me, I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial, endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more."

But the dearest connexion in the world cannot be always thinking upon you. Half his time he is in a state of unconsciousness ; and how much during the other half, is he engrossed ! But there is no remission in the Lord's thoughts. . . . . Observe in the next place, the *wisdom* of his thoughts. You have a dear child, absent from you, and you follow him in your mind. But you know not his present circumstances. You left him in such a place ; but where is he now ? You left him in such a condition. But what is he now ? Perhaps while you are thinking upon his health, he is groaning under a bruised limb, or a painful disorder. Perhaps, while you are thinking of his safety, some enemy is taking advantage of his innocency. Perhaps, while you are rejoicing in his prudence, he is going to take a step that will involve him for life. But when God thinketh upon you, he is perfectly acquainted with your situation, your dangers, your wants. He knows all your walking through this great wilderness, and can afford you the seasonable succour you need. For again, observe the *efficiency* of his thoughts. You think upon another, and you are anxious to guide, or defend, or relieve him. But in how many cases can you think only ? Solicitude cannot control the disease of the body, cannot dissipate the melancholy of the mind. But with God all things are possible. He who thinks upon you is a God at hand and not afar off ; he has all events under his control ; he is the God of all grace. If, therefore, he does not immediately deliver, it is not because he is unable to redress, but because he is waiting to be gracious.—*William Jay.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—I. *My part*—praying and waiting. II. *God's part*—condescension and reply.

Verse 2.—I. The *depth* of God's goodness to his people. It finds them often in a horrible pit and miry clay. There is a certain spider which forms a pit in sand, and lies concealed at the bottom, in order to seize upon other insects that fall into it. Thus David's enemies tried to bring him into a pit. II. The *height* of his goodness. He brought me out, and set my feet upon a rock. That rock is Christ. Those feet are faith and hope. III. The *breadth* of his goodness established my *goings*, restored me to my former place in his love, showing me still to have been his during my low estate. He was the same to me, though I felt not the same to him. My goings refer both to the past and the future. IV. The *strength* of his goodness *established* my goings, making me stand firmer after every fall.—*George Rogers.*

Verses 2, 3.—The sinner's position by nature, and his rescue by grace.

Verses 2, 3.—By one and the same act the Lord works our salvation, our enemies' confusion, and the church's edification.—*J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 3.—The new song, the singer, the teacher.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—I. Find out who turn aside to lies—Atheists, Papists, self-righteous, lovers of sin. II. Show their folly in turning aside from God and truth, and in turning to fallacies which lead to death. III. Show how to be preserved from the like folly, by choosing truth, truthful persons, and above all the service of God.

Verse 5.—1. *There are works of God in his people and for his people.* There are his works of creation, of providence, and of redemption, and also his works of grace, wrought in them by his Spirit, and around them by his providence, as well as for them by his Son. II. *These are wonderful works;* wonderful in their variety, their tenderness, their adaptation to their need, their co-operation with outward means and their power. III. *They are the result of the divine thoughts respecting us.* They come not by chance, not by men, but by the hand of God, and that hand is moved by his will, and that will by his thought respecting us. Every mercy, even the least, represents some kind thought in the mind of God respecting us. God thinks of each one of his people, and every moment. IV. They are innumerable. "*They cannot be reckoned up.*" Could we see all the mercies of God to us and his wonderful works wrought for us individually, they would be countless as the sands, and all these countless mercies represent countless thoughts in the mind and heart of God to each one of his people.—*George Rogers.*

Verse 5.—The multitude of God's thoughts, and deeds of grace; beginning in eternity, continuing for ever; and dealing with this life, heaven, hell, sin, angels, devils, and indeed all things.

Verse 6.—Here David goes beyond himself, and speaks the language of David's Son. This was naturally suggested by God's wonderful works, and innumerable thoughts of love to man. I. *The sacrifices that were not required.* These were the sacrifices and burnt-offerings under the law. 1. When required? From Adam to the coming of Christ. 2. When not required? 3. Why required before? As types of the one method of redemption. 4. Why not now required? Because the great Antetype had come. II. *The sacrifice that was required.* This was the sacrifice offered on Calvary. 1. It was required by God by his justice, his wisdom, his faithfulness, his love, his honour, his glory. 2. It was required by man to give him salvation and confidence in that salvation. 3. It was required for the honour of the moral government of God throughout the universe. III. *The person by whom this sacrifice was offered.* "*Mine ears hast thou opened.*" This is the language of Christ, prospectively denoting—1. Knowledge of the sacrifice required. 2. Consecration of himself as a servant for that end.—*George Rogers.*

Verse 6.—"*Mine ears hast thou opened.*" Readiness to hear, fixity of purpose, perfection of obedience, entireness of consecration.

Verses 6—8.—The Lord gives an ear to hear his word, a mouth to confess it, a heart to love it, and power to keep it.

Verse 7.—I. The time of Christ's coming. "*Then said I.*" When types were exhausted, when prophecies looked for their fulfilment, when worldly wisdom had done its utmost, when the world was almost entirely united under one empire, when the time appointed by the Father had come. II. The design of his coming. "*In the volume*" was written—1. The constitution of his person. 2. His teaching. 3. The manner of his life. 4. The design of his death. 5. His resurrection and ascension. 6. The kingdom he would establish. III. The voluntariness of his coming, "*Lo, I come.*" Though sent by the Father, he came of his own accord. "Christ Jesus came into the world." Men do not come into the world, they are sent into it. "*Lo, I come,*" denotes pre-existence, pre-determination, pre-operation.—*George Rogers.*

Verse 8.—"*To do thy will, O God.*" I. The will of God is seen in the fact

of salvation. It has its origin in the will of God. II. The will of God is seen in the plan of salvation. All things have proceeded, are proceeding, and will proceed according to that plan. III. It is seen in the provision of salvation, in the appointment of his own Son to become the mediator, the atoning sacrifice, the law-fulfiller, the head of the church, that his plan required. IV. It is seen in the accomplishment of salvation.

Verse 9.—Referring to our Lord; a great preacher, a great subject, a great congregation, and his great faithfulness in the work.

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—I. The righteousness *possessed* by God. II. The righteousness *prescribed* by God. III. The righteousness *provided* by God.—*James Frame.*

Verse 10.—I. The preacher must reveal his whole message. II. He must not conceal any part. 1. Not of the righteousness of the law or the gospel. 2. Not of the lovingkindness or grace. 3. Not of any portion of the truth. 1. To omit is to conceal. 2. To entangle with human reasonings. 3. To cover with flowers of rhetoric. 4. To give a partial representation. 5. To put one truth in the place of another. 6. To give the letter without the spirit.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—The great sin of concealing what we know of God.

Verse 11.—Enrichment and preservation sought. The true riches are from God, gifts of his sovereignty, fruits of his mercy, marked with his tenderness. The best preservations are divine love and faithfulness.

Verse 12.—Compare this with verse 5. The number of our sins, and the number of his thoughts of love.

Verse 12 (*second clause*).—I. The soul arrested—"taken hold." II. The soul bewildered—"cannot look up." III. The soul's only refuge—prayer, ver. 13.

Verse 13.—I. The language of believing prayer—deliver me, help me; looking for deliverance and help to God only. II. Of earnest prayer—make haste to help me. III. Of submissive prayer—be pleased, O Lord, if according to thy good pleasure. IV. Of consistent prayer. Help me, which implies efforts for his own deliverance, putting his own shoulder to the wheel.

Verses 11—13.—As an instance of clerical ingenuity, it may be well to mention that Canon Wordsworth has a sermon from these verses upon "The duty of making responses in public prayer."

Verse 14.—*Honi soit mal y pense;* or, the reward of malignity.

Verse 16 (*last clause*).—An every-day saying. Who can use it? What does it mean? Why should *they* say it? Why say it continually?

Verse 17.—The humble "*But,*" and the believing "*Yet.*" The little "*I am,*" and the great "*Thou art.*" The fitting prayer.

Verse 17.—"*The Lord thinketh upon me.*" Admire the condescension, and then consider that this is—I. A promised blessing. II. A practical blessing—he thinks upon us to supply, protect, direct, sanctify, &c. III. A precious blessing—kind thoughts, continual, greatly good. He thinks of us as his creatures with pity, as his children with love, as his friends with pleasure. IV. A present blessing—promises, providences, visitations of grace.

Verse 17.—I. The less we think of ourselves the more God will think upon us. II. The less we put trust in ourselves the more we may trust in God for help and deliverance. III. The less delay in prayer and active efforts the sooner God will appear for us.

WORKS UPON THE FORTIETH PSALM.

A Sermon upon the Fortieth Psalme, preached in the time of Public Fast; in "Sermons by the Rev. ROBERT BRUCE, Minister of Edinburgh, reprinted from the original edition of M.D.X.C., and M.D.X.C.I. . . . Edinburgh: printed for the Wodrow Society. 1843."

Christ and his Work: an Exposition of Psalm XL. By JAMES FRAME, 1869.

PSALM XLI.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. *This title has frequently occurred before, and serves to remind us of the value of the Psalm, seeing that it was committed to no mean songster; and also to inform us as to the author who has made his own experience the basis of a prophetic song, in which a far greater than David is set forth. How wide a range of experience David had! What power it gave him to edify future ages! And how full a type of our Lord did he become! What was bitterness to him has proved to be a fountain of unfailing sweetness to many generations of the faithful.*

Jesus Christ betrayed of Judas Iscariot is evidently the great theme of this Psalm, but we think not exclusively. He is the antitype of David, and all his people are in their measure like him; hence words suitable to the Great Representative are most applicable to those who are in him. Such as receive a vile return for long kindness to others, may read this song with much comfort, for they will see that it is alas! too common for the best of men to be rewarded for their holy charity with cruelty and scorn; and when they have been humbled by falling into sin, advantage has been taken of their low estate, their good deeds have been forgotten and the vilest spite has been vented upon them.

DIVISION. *The psalmist in verses* 1—3, *describes the mercies which are promised to such as consider the poor, and this he uses as a preface to his own personal plea for succour: from verses* 4—9 *he states his own case, proceeds to prayer in verse* 10, *and closes with thanksgiving, verses* 11—13.

EXPOSITION.

BLESSED *is* he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

1. "*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*" This is the third Psalm opening with a benediction, and there is a growth in it beyond the first two. To search the word of God comes first, pardoned sin is second, and now the forgiven sinner brings forth fruit unto God available for the good of others. The word used is as emphatic as in the former cases, and so is the blessing which follows it. The poor intended, are such as are poor in substance, weak in bodily strength, despised in repute, and desponding in spirit. These are mostly avoided and frequently scorned. The worldly proverb bequeaths the hindmost to one who has no mercy. The sick and the sorry are poor company, and the world deserts them as the Amalekite left his dying servant. Such as have been made partakers of divine grace receive a tenderer nature, and are not hardened against their own flesh and blood; they undertake the cause of the downtrodden, and turn their minds seriously to the promotion of their welfare. They do not toss them a penny and go on their way, but enquire into their sorrows, sift out their cause, study the best ways for their relief, and practically come to their rescue; such as these have the mark of the divine favour plainly upon them, and are as surely the sheep of the Lord's pasture as if they wore a brand upon their

foreheads. They are not said to have considered the poor years ago, but they still do so. Stale benevolence, when boasted of, argues present churlishness. First and foremost, yea, far above all others put together in tender compassion for the needy is our Lord Jesus, who so remembered our low estate, that though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor. All his attributes were charged with the task of our uplifting. He weighed our case and came in the fulness of wisdom to execute the wonderful work of mercy by which we are redeemed from our destructions. Wretchedness excited his pity, misery moved his mercy, and thrice blessed is he both by his God and his saints for his attentive care and wise action towards us. He still considereth us; his mercy is always in the present tense, and so let our praises be.

"*The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*" The compassionate lover of the poor thought of others, and therefore God will think of him. God measures to us with our own bushel. Days of trouble come even to the most generous, and they have made the wisest provision for rainy days who have lent shelter to others when times were better with them. The promise is not that the generous saint shall have no trouble, but that he shall be preserved in it, and in due time brought out of it. How true was this of our Lord! never trouble deeper nor triumph brighter than his, and glory be to his name, he secures the ultimate victory of all his blood-bought ones. Would that they all were more like him in putting on bowels of compassion to the poor. Much blessedness they miss who stint their alms. The joy of doing good, the sweet reaction of another's happiness, the approving smile of heaven upon the heart, if not upon the estate; all these the niggardly soul knows nothing of. Selfishness bears in itself a curse, it is a cancer in the heart; while liberality is happiness, and maketh fat the bones. In dark days we cannot rest upon the supposed merit of almsgiving, but still the music of memory brings with it no mean solace when it tells of widows and orphans whom we have succoured, and prisoners and sick folk to whom we have ministered.

2. "*The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.*" His noblest life shall be immortal, and even his mortal life shall be sacredly guarded by the power of Jehovah. Jesus lived on till his hour came, nor could the devices of crafty Herod take away his life till the destined hour had struck; and even then no man took his life from him, but he laid it down of himself, to take it again. Here is the portion of all those who are made like their Lord, they bless and they shall be blessed, they preserve and shall be preserved, they watch over the lives of others and they themselves shall be precious in the sight of the Lord. The miser like the hog is of no use till he is dead—then let him die; the righteous like the ox is of service during life—then let him live. "*And he shall be blessed upon the earth.*" Prosperity shall attend him. His cruse of oil shall not be dried up because he fed the poor prophet. He shall cut from his roll of cloth and find it longer at both ends.

> "There was a man, and some did count him mad,
> The more he gave away the more he had."

If temporal gains be not given him, spirituals shall be doubled to him. His little shall be blessed, bread and water shall be a feast to him. The liberal are and must be blessed even here; they have a present as well as a future portion. Our Lord's real blessedness of heart in the joy that was set before him is a subject worthy of earnest thought, especially as it is the picture of the blessing which all liberal saints may look for. "*And thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*" He helped the distressed, and now he shall find a champion in his God. What would not the good man's enemies do to him if they had him at their disposal? Better be in a pit with vipers than be at the mercy of persecutors. This sentence sets before us a sweet negative, and yet it were not easy to have seen how it could be true of our Lord Jesus, did we not know that although he was exempted from much of blessing, being made a curse for us, yet even he was not altogether nor for ever left of God, but in due time was exalted above all his enemies.

3. "*The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing.*" The everlasting arms shall stay up his soul as friendly hands and downy pillows stay up the body of the sick. How tender and sympathising is this image; how near it brings our God to our infirmities and sicknesses! Whoever heard this of the old heathen Jove, or of the gods of India or China? This is language peculiar to the God of Israel; he it is who deigns to become nurse and attendant upon good men. If he smites with one hand he sustains with the other. Oh, it is blessed fainting when one falls upon the Lord's own bosom, and is upborne thereby! Grace is the best of restoratives; divine love is the noblest stimulant for a languishing patient; it makes the soul strong as a giant, even when the aching bones are breaking through the skin. No physician like the Lord, no tonic like his promise, no wine like his love. "*Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*" What, doth the Lord turn bedmaker to his sick children? Herein is love indeed. Who would not consider the poor if such be the promised reward? A bed soon grows hard when the body is weary with tossing to and fro upon it, but grace gives patience, and God's smile gives peace, and the bed is made soft because the man's heart is content; the pillows are downy because the head is peaceful. Note that the Lord will make *all* his bed, from head to foot. What considerate and indefatigable kindness! Our dear and ever blessed Lord Jesus, though in all respects an inheritor of this promise, for our sakes condescended to forego the blessing, and died on a cross and not upon a bed; yet, even there, he was after awhile upheld and cheered by the Lord his God, so that he died in triumph.

We must not imagine that the benediction pronounced in these three verses belongs to all who casually give money to the poor, or leave it in their wills, or contribute to societies. Such do well, or act from mere custom, as the case may be, but they are not here alluded to. The blessing is for those whose habit it is to love their neighbour as themselves, and who for Christ's sake feed the hungry and clothe the naked. To imagine a man to be a saint who does not consider the poor as he has ability, is to conceive the fruitless fig tree to be acceptable; there will be sharp dealing with many professors on this point in the day when the King cometh in his glory.

4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

6 And if he come to see *me*, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; *when* he goeth abroad, he telleth *it*.

7 All that hate me whisper together against me; against me do they devise my hurt.

8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him: and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

Here we have a controversy between the pleader and his God. He had been a tender friend to the poor, and yet in the hour of his need the promised assistance was not forthcoming. In our Lord's case there was a dark and dreary night in which such arguments were well befitting himself and his condition.

4. "*I said*"—said it in earnest prayer—"*Lord, be merciful unto me.*" Prove now thy gracious dealings with my soul in adversity, since thou didst aforetime give me grace to act liberally in my prosperity. No appeal is made to justice; the petitioner but hints at the promised reward, but goes straightforward to lay his plea at the feet of mercy. How low was our Redeemer brought when such petitions could come from his reverend mouth, when his lips

like lilies dropped such sweet smelling but bitter myrrh! "*Heal my soul.*" My time of languishing is come, now do as thou hast said, and strengthen me, especially in my soul. We ought to be far more earnest for the soul's healing than for the body's ease. We hear much of the cure of souls, but we often forget to care about it. "*For I have sinned against thee.*" Here was the root of sorrow. Sin and suffering are inevitable companions. Observe that by the psalmist sin was felt to be mainly evil because directed against God. This is of the essence of true repentance. The immaculate Saviour could never have used such language as this unless there be here a reference to the sin which he took upon himself by imputation; and for our part we tremble to apply words so manifestly indicating personal rather than imputed sin. Applying the petition to David and other sinful believers, how strangely evangelical is the argument: heal me, not for I am innocent, but "*I have sinned.*" How contrary is this to all self-righteous pleading! How consonant with grace! How inconsistent with merit! Even the fact that the confessing penitent had remembered the poor, is but obliquely urged, but a direct appeal is made to mercy on the ground of great sin. O trembling reader, here is a divinely revealed precedent for thee, be not slow to follow it.

5. "*Mine enemies speak evil of me.*" It was their nature to do and speak evil; it was not possible that the child of God could escape them. The viper fastened on Paul's hand: the better the man the more likely, and the more venomous the slander. Evil tongues are busy tongues, and never deal in truth. Jesus was traduced to the utmost, although no offence was in him. "*When shall he die, and his name perish?*" They could not be content till he was away. The world is not wide enough for evil men to live in while the righteous remain, yea, the bodily presence of the saints may be gone, but their memory is an offence to their foes. It was never merry England, say they, since men took to Psalm-singing. In the Master's case, they cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live." If persecutors could have their way, the church should have but one neck, and that should be on the block. Thieves would fain blow out all candles. The lights of the world are not the delights of the world. Poor blind bats, they fly at the lamp, and try to dash it down; but the Lord liveth, and preserveth both the saints and their names.

6. "*And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity.*" His visits of sympathy are visitations of mockery. When the fox calls on the sick lamb his words are soft, but he licks his lips in hope of the carcass. It is wretched work to have spies haunting one's bedchamber, calling in pretence of kindness, but with malice in their hearts. Hypocritical talk is always fulsome and sickening to honest men, but especially to the suffering saint. Our divine Lord had much of this from the false hearts that watched his words. "*His heart gathereth iniquity to itself.*" Like will to like. The bird makes its nest of feathers. Out of the sweetest flowers chemists can distil poison, and from the purest words and deeds malice can gather groundwork for calumnious report. It is perfectly marvellous how spite spins webs out of no materials whatever. It is no small trial to have base persons around you lying in wait for every word which they may pervert into evil. The Master whom we serve was constantly subject to this affliction. "*When he goeth abroad, he telleth it.*" He makes his lies, and then vends them in open market. He is no sooner out of the house than he outs with his lie, and this against a sick man whom he called to see as a friend—a sick man to whose incoherent and random speeches pity should be showed. Ah, black-hearted wretch! A devil's cub indeed. How far abroad men will go to publish their slanders! They would fain placard the sky with their falsehoods. A little fault is made much of; a slip of the tongue is a libel, a mistake a crime, and if a word can bear two meanings the worse is always fathered upon it. Tell it in Gath, publish it in Askelon, that the daughters of the uncircumcised may triumph. It is base to strike a man when he is down, yet such is the meanness of mankind towards a Christian hero should he for awhile chance to be under a cloud.

7. "*All that hate me whisper together against me.*" The spy meets his comrades in conclave and sets them all a whispering. Why could they not speak out? Were they afraid of the sick warrior? Or were their designs so treacherous that they must needs be hatched in secresy? Mark the unanimity of the wicked—"*all.*" How heartily the dogs unite to hunt the stag! Would God we were half as united in holy labour as persecutors in their malicious projects, and were half as wise as they are crafty, for their whispering was craft as well as cowardice, the conspiracy must not be known till all is ready. "*Against me do they devise my hurt.*" They lay their heads together, and scheme and plot. So did Ahithophel and the rest of Absalom's counsellors, so also did the chief priests and Pharisees. Evil men are good at devising; they are given to meditation, they are deep thinkers, but the mark they aim at is evermore the hurt of the faithful. Snakes in the grass are never there for a good end.

8. "*An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him.*" They whisper that some curse has fallen upon him, and is riveted to him. They insinuate that a foul secret stains his character, the ghost whereof haunts his house, and never can be laid. An air of mystery is cast around this doubly dark saying, as if to show how indistinct are the mutterings of malice. Even thus was our Lord accounted "smitten of God and afflicted." His enemies conceived that God had forsaken him, and delivered him for ever into their hands. "*And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.*" His sickness they hoped was mortal, and this was fine news for them. No more would the good man's holiness chide their sin, they would now be free from the check of his godliness. Like the friars around Wickliffe's bed, their prophesyings were more jubilant than accurate, but they were a sore scourge to the sick man. When the Lord smites his people with his rod of affliction for a small moment, their enemies expect to see them capitally executed, and prepare their *jubilates* to celebrate their funerals, but they are in too great a hurry, and have to alter their ditties and sing to another tune. Our Redeemer eminently foretokened this, for out of his lying in the grave he has gloriously risen. Vain the watch, the stone, the seal! Rising he pours confusion on his enemies.

9. "*Yea.*" Here is the climax of the sufferer's woe, and he places before it the emphatic affirmation, as if he thought that such villany would scarcely be believed. "*Mine own familiar friend.*" "The man of my peace," so runs the original, with whom I had no differences, with whom I was in league, who had aforetime ministered to my peace and comfort. This was Ahithophel to David, and Iscariot with our Lord. Judas was an apostle, admitted to the privacy of the Great Teacher, hearing his secret thoughts, and, as it were, allowed to read his very heart. "*Et tu Brute?*" said the expiring Cæsar. The kiss of the traitor wounded our Lord's heart as much as the nail wounded his hand. "*In whom I trusted.*" Judas was the treasurer of the apostolic college. Where we place great confidence an unkind act is the more severely felt. "*Which did eat of my bread.*" Not only as a guest but as a dependant, a pensioner at my board. Judas dipped in the same dish with his Lord, and hence the more accursed was his treachery in his selling his Master for a slave's price. "*Hath lifted up his heel against me.*" Not merely turned his back on me, but left me with a heavy kick such as a vicious horse might give. Hard is it to be spurned in our need by those who formerly fed at our table. It is noteworthy that the Redeemer applied only the last words of this verse to Judas, perhaps because, knowing his duplicity, he had never made a familiar friend of him in the fullest sense, and had not placed implicit trust in him. Infernal malice so planned it that every circumstance in Jesus' death should add wormwood to it; and the betrayal was one of the bitterest drops of gall. We are indeed, wretched when our *quondam* friend becomes our relentless foe, when confidence is betrayed, when all the rites of hospitality are perverted, and ingratitude is the only return for kindness; yet in so deplorable a case we may cast ourselves upon the faithfulness of God, who, having delivered our Covenant Head, is in verity engaged to be the very present help of all for whom that covenant was made.

10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

10. "*But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me.*" How the hunted and affrighted soul turns to her God! How she seems to take breath with a "but, thou!" How she clings to the hope of mercy from God when every chance of pity from man is gone! "*And raise me up.*" Recover me from my sickness, give me to regain my position. Jesus was raised up from the grave; his descent was ended by an ascent. "*That I may requite them.*" This as it reads is a truly Old Testament sentence, and quite aside from the spirit of Christianity, yet we must remember that David was a person in magisterial office, and might without any personal revenge, desire to punish those who had insulted his authority and libelled his public character. Our great Apostle and High Priest had no personal animosities, but even he by his resurrection has requited the powers of evil, and avenged on death and hell all their base attacks upon his cause and person. Still the strained application of every sentence of this Psalm to Christ is not to our liking, and we prefer to call attention to the better spirit of the gospel beyond that of the old dispensation.

11 By this I know thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

13 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen and Amen.

11. We are all cheered by tokens for good, and the psalmist felt it to be an auspicious omen, that after all his deep depression he was not utterly given over to his foe. "*By this I know that thou favourest me.*" Thou hast a special regard to me, I have the secret assurance of this in my heart, and, therefore, thine outward dealings do not dismay me, for I know that thou lovest me in them all. "*Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*" What if the believer has no triumph over his foes, he must be glad that they do not triumph over him. If we have not all we would we should praise God for all we have. Much there is in us over which the ungodly might exult, and if God's mercy keeps the dogs' mouths closed when they might be opened, we must give him our heartiest gratitude. What a wonder it is that when the devil enters the lists with a poor, erring, bedridden, deserted, slandered saint, and has a thousand evil tongues to aid him, yet he cannot win the day, but in the end slinks off without renown.

"The feeblest saint shall win the day
Though death and hell obstruct his way."

12. "*And as for me,*" despite them all and in the sight of them all, "*thou upholdest me in mine integrity;*" thy power enables me to rise above the reach of slander by living in purity and righteousness. Our innocence and consistency are the result of the divine upholding. We are like those glasses without feet, which can only be upright while they are held in the hand; we fall, and spill, and spoil all, if left to ourselves. The Lord should be praised every day if we are preserved from gross sin. When others sin they show us what we should do but for grace. "He to-day and I to-morrow," was the exclamation of a holy man, whenever he saw another falling into sin. Our integrity is comparative as well as dependent, we must therefore be humbled while we are grateful. If we are clear of the faults alleged against us by our calumniators, we have nevertheless quite enough of actual blameworthiness to render it shameful for us to boast. "*And settest me before thy face for ever.*" He rejoiced that he lived under the divine surveillance; tended, cared for, and smiled upon by his Lord; and yet more, that it would be so world without end.

To stand before an earthly monarch is considered to be a singular honour, but what must it be to be a perpetual courtier in the palace of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible?

13. The Psalm ends with a doxology. "*Blessed be the Lord*," *i.e.*, let him be glorified. The blessing at the beginning from the mouth of God is returned from the mouth of his servant. We cannot add to the Lord's blessedness, but we can pour out our grateful wishes, and these he accepts, as we receive little presents of flowers from children who love us. Jehovah is the personal name of our God. "*God of Israel*" is his covenant title, and shows his special relation to his elect people. "*From everlasting and to everlasting.*" The strongest way of expressing endless duration. *We* die, but the glory of God goes on and on without pause. "*Amen and amen.*" So let it surely, firmly, and eternally be. Thus the people joined in the Psalm by a double shout of holy affirmation; let us unite in it with all our hearts. This last verse may serve for the prayer of the universal church in all ages, but none can sing it so sweetly as those who have experienced as David did the faithfulness of God in times of extremity.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—The *Syriac* says, "It was a Psalm of David, when he appointed overseers to take care of the poor."—*Adam Clarke.*

Whole Psalm.—A prophecy of Christ and the traitor Judas.—*Eusebius of Cæsarea, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*" Interpreters are generally of opinion that the exercise of kindness and compassion, manifested in taking care of the miserable, and helping them, is here commended. Those, however, who maintain that the psalmist here commends the considerate candour of those who judge wisely and charitably of men in adversity, form a better judgment of his meaning. Indeed, the participle, מַשְׂכִּיל, *maskil*, cannot be explained in any other way. At the same time it ought to be observed on what account it is that David declares those to be blessed who form a wise and prudent judgment concerning the afflictions by which God chastises his servants. . . . . Doubtless it happened to him as it did to the holy patriarch Job, whom his friends reckoned to be one of the most wicked of men, when they saw God treating him with great severity. And certainly it is an error which is by far too common among men, to look upon those who are oppressed with afflictions as condemned and reprobate. . . . . For the most part, indeed, we often speak rashly and indiscriminately concerning others, and, so to speak, plunge even into the lowest abyss those who labour under affliction. To restrain such a rash and unbridled spirit, David says, that they are blessed who do not suffer themselves, by speaking at random, to judge harshly of their neighbours; but discerning aright the afflictions by which they are visited, mitigate, by the wisdom of the spirit, the severe and unjust judgments to which we naturally are so prone.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*" As Christ considered us in our state of poverty, so ought we most attentively to consider him in his; to consider what he suffered in his own person; to discern him suffering in his poor afflicted members; and to extend to them the mercy which he extended to us. He, who was "blessed" of Jehovah, and "delivered in the evil day" by a glorious resurrection, will "bless" and "deliver" in like manner, such as for his sake, love and relieve their brethren.—*George Horne.*

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*" Not the poor of the world in common, nor poor saints in particular, but some single poor man; for the word is in the singular number, and designs our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the last verse of the preceding Psalm, is said to be *poor and needy.*—*John Gill.*

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*" I call your attention to the way in which the Bible enjoins us to take up the care of the poor. It does not say in the text before us, Commiserate the poor; for, if it said no more than this, it would leave their necessities to be provided for by the random ebullitions of an impetuous and unreflecting sympathy. It provides them with a better security than the mere feeling of compassion—a feeling which, however useful to the purpose of excitement, must be controlled and regulated. Feeling is but a faint and fluctuating security. Fancy may mislead it. The sober realities of life may disgust it. Disappointment may extinguish it. Ingratitude may embitter it. Deceit, with its counterfeit representations, may allure it to the wrong object. At all events, Time is the little circle in which it in general expatiates. It needs the impression of sensible objects to sustain it; nor can it enter with zeal or with vivacity into the wants of the abstract and invisible soul. The Bible, then, instead of leaving the relief of the poor to the mere instinct of sympathy, makes it a subject for *consideration*—"Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor," a grave and prosaic exercise, I do allow, and which makes no figure in those high-wrought descriptions, where the exquisite tale of benevolence is made up of all the sensibilities of tenderness on the one hand, and of all the ecstacies of gratitude on the other. The Bible rescues the cause from the mischief to which a heedless or unthinking sensibility would expose it. It brings it under the cognisance of a higher faculty—a faculty of sturdier operation than to be weary in well-doing, and of sturdier endurance than to give it up in disgust. It calls you to *consider* the poor. It makes the virtue of relieving them a matter of computation, as well as of sentiment, and in so doing puts you beyond the reach of the various delusions, by which you are at one time led to prefer the indulgence of pity to the substantial interest of its object; at another, are led to retire chagrined and disappointed from the scene of duty, because you have not met with the gratitude or the honesty that you laid your account with; at another, are led to expend all your anxieties upon the accommodation of time, and to overlook eternity. It is the office of *consideration* to save you from all these fallacies. Under its tutorage attention to the wants of the poor ripens into principle. . . . .

It must be obvious to all of you, that it is not enough that you give money, and add your name to the contributions of charity. You must give it with judgment. You must give your time and your attention. You must descend to the trouble of examination. You must rise from the repose of contemplation, and make yourself acquainted with the object of your benevolent exercises. . . . . To give money is not to do all the work and labour of benevolence. You must go to the poor man's sick bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. This is true and unsophisticated goodness. It may be recorded in no earthly documents; but, if done under the influence of Christian principle, in a word, if done unto Jesus, it is written in the book of heaven, and will give a new lustre to that crown to which his disciples look forward in time, and will wear through eternity.—*From a Sermon preached before the Society for Relief of the Destitute Sick, in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, by Thomas Chalmers, D.D. and LL.D.* (1780—1847).

Verse 1.—"*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*" A Piedmontese nobleman into whose company I fell, at Turin, told me the following story: "I was weary of life, and after a day such as few have known, and none would wish to remember, was hurrying along the street to the river, when I felt a sudden check, I turned and beheld a little boy, who had caught the skirt of my cloak in his anxiety to solicit my notice. His look and manner were irresistible. No less so was the lesson he had learnt—'There are six of us, and we are dying for want of food.' 'Why should I not,' said I, to myself, 'relieve this wretched family? I have the means, and it will not delay me many minutes. But what if it does?' The scene of misery he conducted me to I cannot describe. I threw them my purse, and their burst of gratitude overcame me. It filled my eyes, it went as a cordial to my heart. 'I will call again to-morrow,' I cried. 'Fool that I

was to think of leaving a world where such pleasure was to be had, and so cheaply!'"—*Samuel Rogers* (1763—1855) *in* "*Italy.*"

Verse 1.—"*He that considereth the poor:*"—

An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,
The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove.
'Tis not enough that we with sorrow sigh,
That we the wants of pleading man supply,
That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,
Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal:
Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,
The Christian spirit loves with aid to go:
Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead,
But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need;
Her utmost aid to every ill applies,
And plants relief for coming miseries.

George Crabbe, 1754—1832.

Verse 1.—How foolish are they that fear to lose their wealth by giving it, and fear not to lose themselves by keeping it! He that lays up his gold may be a good *jailer*, but he that lays it out is a good *steward*. Merchants traffic thither with a commodity where 'tis precious in regard of scarcity. We do not buy wines in England to carry them to France, spices in France to carry them to the Indies; so for labour and work, repentance and mortification, there is none of them in heaven, there is peace and glory, and the favour of God indeed. A merchant without his commodity hath but a sorry welcome. God will ask men that arrive at heaven's gates, *ubi opera?* Rev. xxii. 12. His reward shall be according to our works. Thou hast riches here, and here be objects that need thy riches—the poor; in heaven there are riches enough but no poor, therefore, by faith in Christ make over to them thy moneys in this world, that by bill of exchange thou mayest receive it in the world to come; that only you carry with you which you send before you. Do good while it is in your power; relieve the oppressed, succour the fatherless, while your estates are your own; when you are dead your riches belong to others. One light carried before a man is more serviceable than twenty carried after him. In your compassion to the distressed, or for pious uses, let your hands be your executors, and your eyes your overseers.—*Francis Raworth, Teacher to the Church at Shore-ditch, in a Funeral Sermon*, 1656.

Verses 1, 3.—It is a blessed thing to receive when a man hath need; but 'tis a more blessed thing to give than to receive. "*Blessed* (saith the prophet David) *is he that considereth the poor.*" What? to say, alas, poor man! the world is hard with him, I would there were a course taken to do him good? No, no; but so to consider him as to give; to give till the poor man be satisfied, to draw out one's sheaf, ay, one's very soul to the hungry. But what if troubles should come? were it not better to keep money by one? Money will not deliver one. It may be an occasion to endanger one, to bring one into, rather than help one out of trouble; but if a man be a merciful man, *God will deliver him*, either by himself, or by some other man or matter. Ay, but what if *sickness* come? Why, "*the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing;*" and, which is a great ease and kindness; God, as it were, himself "*will make all his bed in his sickness.*" Here poor people have the advantage: such must not say, Alas, I am a poor woman, what works of mercy can I do? for they are they who best can make the beds of sick folk, which we see is a great act of mercy, in that it is said, that *the Lord himself will make their bed in their sickness.* And there are none so poor, but they may *make the beds* of the sick.—*Richard Capel.*

Verses 1, 5.—"*He that considereth.*" "*Mine enemies.*" Strigelius has observed, there is a perpetual antithesis in this Psalm between the few who have a due regard to the poor in spirit, and the many who afflict or desert them.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 2.—"*The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.*" It is worthy of

remark, that *benevolent persons*, who "*consider the poor*," and especially the *sick poor;* who search cellars, garrets, back lanes, and such abodes of misery, to find them out (even in the places where contagion keeps its seat), very seldom fall a prey to their own benevolence. The Lord, in an especial manner, keeps them *alive*, and preserves them; while many, who endeavour to keep far from the contagion, are assailed by it, and fall victims to it. God loves the merciful man.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—"*He shall be blessed upon the earth.*" None of the godly man's afflictions shall hinder or take away his begun blessedness, even in this world.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*" Into what minuteness of exquisite and touching tenderness does the Lord condescend to enter! One feels almost as we may suppose Peter felt when the Saviour came to him, and would have washed his feet, "Lord! thou shalt never wash my feet;" thou shalt never make my bed. And yet, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" if the Lord make not our bed in our sickness, there is no peace nor comfort there. We have had David calling on God to bow down his ear, like a loving mother listening to catch the feeblest whisper of her child; and the image is full of the sweetest sympathy and condescension; but here the Lord, the great God of heaven, he that said when on earth, "I am among you as one that serveth," does indeed take upon him the form, and is found in fashion as a servant, fulfilling all the loving and tender offices of an assiduous nurse.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*" The meaning rather is, "it is no longer a sick bed, for thou hast healed him of his disease."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3.—When a good man is ill at ease, God promiseth to make all his bed in his sickness. Pillow, bolster, head, feet, sides, all his bed. Surely that God who made him knows so well his measure and temper as to make his bed to please him. Herein his art is excellent, not fitting the bed to the person, but the person to the bed; infusing patience into him. But, oh! how shall God make my bed, who have no bed of mine own to make. Thou fool, he can make thy not having a bed to be a bed unto thee. When Jacob slept on the ground, who would not have had his hard lodging, therewithal to have his heavenly dream?—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 3.—Sure that bed must need be soft which God will make.—*T. Watson.*

Verse 3.—We must not forget that Oriental beds needed not to be made in the same sense as our own. They were never more than mattresses or quilts thickly padded, and were turned when they became uncomfortable, and that is just the word here used.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 3.—When I visited one day, as he was dying, my beloved friend Benjamin Parsons, I said, "How are you to-day, Sir?" He said, "My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows—infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom." Preaching in the Canterbury Hall, in Brighton, I mentioned this some time since; and many months after I was requested to call upon a poor but holy young woman, apparently dying. She said, "I felt I must see you before I died. I heard you tell the story of Benjamin Parsons and his three pillows; and when I went through a surgical operation, and it was very cruel, I was leaning my head on pillows, and as they were taking them away I said, "Mayn't I keep them?" The surgeon said, "No, my dear, we must take them away." "But," said I, "you can't take away Benjamin Parson's three pillows. I can lay my head on infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom."—*Paxton Hood, in "Dark Sayings on a Harp,"* 1865.

Verses 3, 4.—What saith David from the very bottom of his heart, in his sickness? Not, take away this death only. No; but David being sick, first comforts himself with this promise, "*The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;*" and then adds, "*I*

said, Lord, be merciful unto me, and heal my soul;" that is, destroy my lusts, which are the diseases of my soul, Lord; and heal my soul, and renew life and communion with thee, which is the health and strength of my soul. Do not take this sickness and death only away; but this sin away, that hath dishonoured thee, hath separated between me and thee: "*Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.*"—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 4.—"*I said, Lord, be merciful.*" Mercy, not justice! The extreme of mercy for the extreme of misery. Righteousness as filthy rags; a flesh in which dwelleth no good thing, on the one side; on the other, it is "neither herb nor mollifying plaster that restored" to health; "but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things." Wisd. xvi. 12.—*Thomas Aquinas, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 4.—God is the strength of a Christian's heart, by healing and restoring him when the infused habits of grace fail, and sin grows strong and vigorous. A Christian never fails in the exercise of grace, but sin gives him a wound; and therefore David prayed, "*Lord, heal my soul, for I have sinned.*" And what David prayed for, God promiseth to his people: "I will heal their backsliding." Hosea xiv. 4. The weakness and decay of grace, brings a Christian presently to the falling sickness; and so it did David and Ephraim; ay, but God will be a physician to the soul in this case, and will heal their diseases; and so he did David's falling sickness, for which he returned the tribute of praise. Psalm ciii. 3.—*Samuel Blackerby.*

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Saul and Judas each said, "I have sinned;" but David says, "I have sinned *against thee.*"—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 5.—"*Mine enemies speak evil of me.*" *To speak* is here used in the sense of *to imprecate.*—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—"*His name.*" It is the *name*, the character, and privileges of a true servant of God, that calls out the hatred of ungodly men, and they would gladly extirpate him from their sight.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 6.—"*If he come to see me, he speaketh vanity:*" many fair words, but none of them true.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 6.—I remember a pretty apologue that Bromiard tells:—A fowler, in a sharp, frosty morning, having taken many little birds for which he had long watched, began to take up his nets, and nipping the birds on the head laid them down. A young thrush, espying the tears trickling down his cheeks by reason of the extreme cold, said to her mother, that certainly the man was very merciful and compassionate, who wept so bitterly over the calamity of the poor birds. But her mother told her more wisely, that she might better judge of the man's disposition by his hand than by his eye; and if the hands do strike treacherously, he can never be admitted to friendship, who speaks fairly and weeps pitifully.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Verse 6.—"*His heart gathereth iniquity to itself.*" 1. By adding sin to sin, in that he covers over his malice with such horrid hypocrisy. 2. By inventing or contriving all the several ways he can to ensnare me, or do me some mischief, thereby seeking to satisfy and please his corrupt lusts and affections; 3. (which I like best), by observing all he can in me, and drawing what he can from me, and so laying all up together in his mind, as the ground of his unjust surmises and censures concerning me.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 8.—"*An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him.*" *An evil* deed of Belial cleaveth fast to him. Grammarians maintain that the word *Belial* is compounded of בְּלִי, *beli*, and יָעַל, *yaal*, which signify "*not to rise*" the expression, "*thing of Belial*" (for so it is literally in the Hebrew), I understand in this place as meaning an extraordinary and hateful crime which as we commonly say can never be expiated, and from which there is no possibility of escape; unless perhaps some would rather refer it to the affliction itself under

which he laboured, as if his enemies had said that he was seized by some incurable malady.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 8.—"*An evil disease,*" etc. What is here meant by דְּבַר־בְּלִיַּעַל is matter of some difficulty. The ancient interpreters generally render it a *perverse*, or *mischievous*, or *wicked word;* the Chaldee, a *perverse word;* the Syriac, a *word of iniquity;* the LXX. λόγον παράνομον; the Latin, *iniquum verbum*, a *wicked word;* the Arabic, *words contrary to the law.* And so in all probability it is set to signify a *great slander*, or *calumny*—that as "men of Belial" are *slanderous* persons, so the *speech of Belial* shall signify a *slanderous* speech. And this is said to "*cleave*" to him on whom it is fastened, it being the nature of calumnies, when strongly affixed on any, to *cleave* fast, and leave some *evil mark* behind them.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 9.—"*Yea, mine own familiar friend,*" etc. The sufferings of the church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home: her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands; and, unnatural as it may seem, they who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to "*lift the heel*" against her.—*George Horne.*

Verse 9.—"*Mine own familiar friend.*" He who, on visiting me, continually saluted me with the kiss of love and veneration, and the usual address: peace be to thee.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 9.—"*Which did eat of my bread.*" If the same sentiment prevailed among the Hebrews, which prevails at the present day among the Beduin Arabs, of sacred regard to the person and property of one with whom they have eaten bread and salt, the language is very forcible. "*Hath lifted up his heel:*" a metaphor drawn from the horse, which attacks with its heel. This language may well have been used by our Saviour, in John xiii. 18, in the way of rhetorical illustration or emphasis.—*George R. Noyes, D.D.*

Verse 9.—"*Hath lifted up his heel against me.*" In this phrase he seems to allude to a beast's kicking at his master by whom he is fed, or the custom of men's spurning at or trampling upon those that are cast down on the ground, in a way of despite and contempt.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 9.—"*Hath lifted up his heel against me;*" *i.e.*, hath spurned me, hath kicked at me, as a vicious beast of burden does; hath insulted me in my misery. *Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 10.—"*That I may requite them.*" Either (1), kindness for injuries (as in Psalm xxxv. 13): it is the mark of a good and brave man to do good to all in his power, to hurt no one, even though provoked by wrong: or, (2), punishment for wrong-doing—*that I may punish them;* for am I not their magistrate, and the executioner of God's justice!—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 10.—"*That I may requite them.*" David was not as one of the common people, but a king appointed by God and invested with authority, and it is not from an impulse of the flesh, but in virtue of the nature of his office, that he is led to denounce against his enemies the punishment which they had merited. *John Calvin.*

Verse 11.—"*By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me:*" not because I have no enemies, or because I have no trouble which would overcome me. Therefore when he wrote down *many troubles*, he blotted it (as it were) with his pen again, as a merchant razeth his book when the debt is discharged; and instead of *many troubles*, he putteth in, *the Lord delivereth.* Because he forgiveth all sins, he is said to deliver from all troubles, to show that we have need of no Saviour, no helper, no comforter, but him.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 11.—"*By this I know that thou favourest me.*" In this text we see two things. 1. How David assureth himself of God's love towards him. 2. How thankful he is to God for assuring him of his love. The first he doth by

two arguments ; one is taken from his enemies, they were prevented of their expectation—"Therefore thou lovest me." The other is taken from his own estate, which was not one whit hurt, or impaired, but bettered by them. . . . Here the prophet speaketh of his knowledge, and telleth us that though he knew not all things, yet he knew that God loved him, and so long as he knoweth that, he careth not greatly for other matters, how the world goeth with him, etc. And, to say the truth, he need not, for he that is sure of that, is sure of all. God loveth all his creatures as a good God, and hateth nothing that he made, but he loveth his elect children with a more especial love than the rest, as a Father in Christ Jesus, and he that is sure that God doth so favour him, is sure, I say, of all. For to him whom God loveth, he will deny no good thing, no, not his own Son ; and if he gave us his Son, because he loved us, how shall he not with him give us all things else ?

When the child is persuaded that his father loveth him, he is bold to ask this and that of his father : so may we be bold to ask anything of God our heavenly Father that is good for us, when we be sure that he loveth us. As Mary and Martha put Christ in mind but of two things ; the first was, that Christ loved their brother Lazarus ; the second was, that Lazarus was sick ; "He whom thou lovest is sick :" it was no need to tell him what he should do, for they knew he would do what might be done for him, because he loved him. So we may say to the Lord, when we are sure that he loveth us : Lord, he whom thou lovest wanteth this or that for his body or his soul. We need not then appoint him what to do, or when, or how ; for look what he seeth most convenient for us, and for his own glory, he will surely do it. Therefore whatsoever David knoweth, he will be sure to know this ; and whatsoever he is ignorant of, yet of this he will not be ignorant ; to teach us that whatsoever we seek to make sure, this must first be made sure, or else nothing is sure. Peter bids us make our election sure ; Job, when he saith, "I am sure that my Redeemer liveth," teacheth us to make our redemption sure. And here David teacheth us to make *God's favour* sure : now if we make that sure, then our election is sure, our redemption is sure, our vocation is sure, and our salvation is sure.—*William Burton*, 1602.

Verse 11.—"*Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*" When God doth deliver us from the hands of our enemies, or any trouble else, we may persuade ourselves thereby, he hath a favour unto us, as David did. But then it may be demanded, If God doth love his church, why doth he suffer his church to be troubled and molested with enemies ? The reason is this, because by this means his love may be made more manifest in saving and delivering them. For as a sure friend is not known but in time of need, so God's goodness and love is never so well perceived as it is in helping of us when we cannot help ourselves. As Adam's fall did serve to manifest God's justice and mercy, the one in punishing, the other in pardoning of sin, which otherwise we had never known : so the troubles of the church serve to manifest, first, our deserts by reason of our sins ; secondly, our weakness and inability to help ourselves ; and, thirdly, the lovingkindness of the Lord our God, in saving and defending, that so we might be truly thankful, and return all the praise and glory to God, and none to ourselves. So that the church of God may have enemies, and yet be still the beloved of God, as Lazarus was beloved of Christ, although he was sick ; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and therefore he correcteth them because he loveth them—*William Burton.*

Verse 11.—God preserves his own, and bringeth their foes to nought : after Passion week comes Easter.—*J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 12.—"*Integrity.*" This same integrity is like Noah's ark, wherein he was preserved, when others perished, being without it. It is like the red thread, which the spies of Joshua gave to Rahab, it was a charter whereby she claimed her life when the rest were destroyed, which had not the like. So is this integrity of small reckoning, I confess, with the men of this world, which

think that there is no other heaven but earth; but as Rahab's thread was better to her than all her goods and substance when the sword came, so this is better to God's children than all the world when death comes. If they have this within they care not, nay, they need not care what can come without. If Satan's buffeting come, this is a helmet of proof; if Satan's darts fly out, this is a shield to quench them; if floods of crosses come to carry us away, this is a boat to bear us up; if all the world cast mire and filth in our faces, we are never a whit the more deformed, but still beautiful for all that, for "the king's daughter," (saith Solomon, Psalm xlv. 13), that is, the church of Christ, "is all glorious within."—*William Burton.*

Verse 12.—"*Settest me before thy face for ever;*" *or hast confirmed or established me in thy presence; i.e.*, either under thine eye and special care, or to minister unto thee, not inly in thy temple, but as a king over thy people, or in that land where thou art peculiarly present.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 13.—"*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.*" We are here taught, 1. To give glory to God, as "*the Lord God of Israel,*" a God in covenant with his people; that has done great and kind things for them, and has more and better in reserve. 2. To give him glory as an eternal God, that has both his being and his blessedness "*from everlasting and to everlasting.*" 3. To do this with great affection and fervour of spirit, intimated in a double seal set to it, "*Amen, and Amen.*" We say Amen to it, and let all others say Amen too.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 13.—"*Amen and Amen.*" As the Psalms were not written by one man, so neither do they form one book. The Psalter is, in fact a Pentateuch, and the lines of demarcation, which divide the five books one from another, are clear and distinct enough. At the end of the 41st Psalm, of the 72nd, of the 89th, and of the 106th, we meet with the solemn *Amen*, single or redoubled, following on a doxology, which indicates that one book ends and that another is about to begin. A closer study of the Psalms shows that each book possesses characteristics of its own. Jehovah ("the Lord") for example, is prominent as the divine name in the first book, Elohim ("God") in the second.—*E. H. Plumptre, M.A., in* "*Biblical Studies,*" 1870.

There is also another observable difference between the two books. In the first, all those Psalms which have any inscription at all are expressly assigned to David as their author, whereas in the second we find a whole series attributed to some of the Levitical singers.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

How ancient this division is cannot now be clearly ascertained. Jerome, in his epistle to Marcella, and Epiphanius speak of the Psalms as having been divided by the Hebrews into five books, but when this division was made they do not inform us. The forms of ascriptions of praise, added at the end of each of the five books, are in the Septuagint version, from which we may conclude that this distribution had been made before that version was executed. It was probably made by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from Babylon to their own country, and the establishment of the worship of God in the new temple, and it was perhaps made in imitation of a similar distribution of the books of Moses. In making this division of the Hebrew Psalter, regard appears to have been paid to the subject matter of the Psalms.—*John Calvin.*

These forty-one Psalms, it has been observed, forming the first book, relate chiefly to the ministry of Christ upon earth, preparing those who were looking for the consolation of Israel, for his appearing amongst them. Accordingly, the second book, commencing with Psalm xlii., may refer chiefly to the infant church of Christ.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

May not the growth of the Book of Psalms be illustrated by the case of our Modern Hymn Books which in the course of years require first one appendix and then another, so as to incorporate the growing psalmody of the church? In this case the purely Davidic Psalms of the first division formed the nucleus to which other sacred songs were speedily added.—*C. H. S.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—The incidental blessings resulting from considering the pious poor. 1. We learn gratitude. 2. We see patience. 3. We often remark the triumphs of great grace. 4. We obtain light on Christian experience. 5. We have their prayers. 6. We feel the pleasure of beneficence. 7. We enter into communion with the lowly Saviour.

Verse 1.—The support of the Small-pox Hospitals recommended.—*Bishop Squire*, 1760. Scores of sermons of this kind have been preached from this text.

Verse 2.—"*Blessed upon the earth.*" What blessings of an earthly character godly character secures, and in general what it is to be blessed with regard to this life.

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—What it is to be delivered *in* trouble. From impatience, from despair, from sinful expedients, from violent attacks, from losing fellowship with God.

Verse 3.—Strength in weakness. Inward strength, divinely given, continuously sustained, enduring to the end, triumphant in death, glorifying to God, proving the reality of grace, winning others to the faith.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—The heavenly bed-making.

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—A saying worth repeating: "*I said.*" It expresses penitence, humility, earnestness, faith, importunity, fear of God, &c.

Verse 4.—"*Heal my soul.*" I. The hereditary disease, breaking out in many disorders—open sin, unbelief, decline of grace, &c. II. Spiritual health struggling with it; shown in spiritual pain, desire, prayer, effort. III. The well-proved Physician. Has healed, and will, by his word, his blood, his Spirit, &c.

Verse 4.—"*I have sinned against thee.*" This confession is personal, plain, without pretence of excuse, comprehensive and intelligent, for it reveals the very heart of sin—"against thee."

Verse 5.—What we may expect. What our enemies desire. What we may, therefore prize, *i.e.*, the power of Christian life and name. What we should do—tell the Lord all in prayer. What good will then come of the evil.

Verse 6 (*first clause*).—The folly and sin of frivolous visits.

Verse 6 (*second and third clauses*).—Like to like, or the way in which character draws its like to itself. The same subject might be treated under the title of *The Chiffonnier*, or the rag-collector. What he gathers; where he puts it—in his "*heart*;" what he does with it; what he gets for it; and what will become of him.

Verses 7—12.—On a sick bed a man discovers not only his enemies and his friends, but himself and his God, more intimately.

Verse 9.—The treachery of Judas.

Verse 11.—Deliverance from temptation a token of divine favour.

Verse 12.—This text reveals the insignia of those whom grace has distinguished. 1. Their integrity is manifest. 2. Their character is divinely sustained. 3. They dwell in the favour of God. 4. Their position is stable and continues. 5. Their eternal future is secure.

Verse 13.—I. The object of praise—Jehovah, the covenant God. II. The nature of the praise—without beginning or end. III. Our participation in the praise—"Amen and Amen."

WORK UPON THE FORTY-FIRST PSALM.

"*David's Evidence; or, the Assurance of God's Love:* declared in seauen Sermons upon the three last verses of the Forty-first Psalme. By W[ILLIAM] B[URTON]. Minister of the Word at Reading in Barkeshire. . . . 1602." 4to.

THE ancient rabbins saw in the Five Books of the Psalter the image of the Five Books of the Law. This way of looking on the Psalms as a second Pentateuch, the echo of the first, passed over into the Christian church, and found favour with some early fathers. It has commended itself to the acceptance of good recent expositors, like Dr. Delitzsch, who calls the Psalter "the congregation's five-fold word to the Lord, even as the *Thora* (the Law) is the Lord's five-fold word to the Congregation." This may be mere fancy, but its existence from ancient times shows that the five-fold division attracted early notice.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

God presented Israel with the Law, a Pentateuch, and grateful Israel responded with a Psalter, a Pentateuch of praise, in acknowledgment of the divine gift.—*J. L. K.*

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST BOOK OF THE PSALMS.

PSALM XLII.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah.—*Dedicated to the Master of Music, this Psalm is worthy of his office; he who can sing best can have nothing better to sing. It is called* Maschil, *or an instructive ode; and full as it is of deep experimental expressions, it is eminently calculated to instruct those pilgrims whose road to heaven is of the same trying kind as David's was. It is always edifying to listen to the experience of a thoroughly gracious and much afflicted saint.*

That choice band of singers, the sons of Korah, *are bidden to make this delightful Psalm one of their peculiars. They had been spared when their father and all his company, and all the children of his associates were swallowed up alive in their sin.* (Num. xxvii. 11.) *They were the spared ones of sovereign grace. Preserved, we know not why, by the distinguishing favour of God, it may be surmised that after their remarkable election to mercy, they became so filled with gratitude that they addicted themselves to sacred music in order that their spared lives might be consecrated to the glory of God. At any rate, we who have been rescued as they were from going down into the pit, out of the mere good pleasure of Jehovah, can heartily join in this Psalm, and indeed in all the songs which show forth the praises of our God and the pantings of our hearts after him. Although David is not mentioned as the author, this Psalm must be the offspring of his pen; it is so Davidic, it smells of the son of Jesse, it bears the marks of his style and experience in every letter. We could sooner doubt the authorship of the second part of Pilgrim's Progress than question David's title to be the composer of this Psalm.*

SUBJECT.—*It is the cry of a man far removed from the outward ordinances and worship of God, sighing for the long-loved house of his God; and at the same time it is the voice of a spiritual believer, under depressions, longing for the renewal of the divine presence, struggling with doubts and fears, but yet holding his ground by faith in the living God. Most of the Lord's family have sailed on the sea which is here so graphically described. It is probable that David's flight from Absalom may have been the occasion for composing this Maschil.*

DIVISION.—*The structure of the song directs us to consider it in two parts which end with the same refrain;* 1—5 *and then* 6—11.

EXPOSITION.

AS the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where *is* thy God?

4 When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.

1. "*As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*" As after a long drought the poor fainting hind longs for the streams, or rather as the hunted hart instinctively seeks after the river to lave its smoking flanks and to escape the dogs, even so my weary, persecuted soul pants after the

Lord my God. Debarred from public worship, David was heartsick. Ease he did not seek, honour he did not covet, but the enjoyment of communion with God was an urgent need of his soul; he viewed it not merely as the sweetest of all luxuries, but as an absolute necessity, like water to a stag. Like the parched traveller in the wilderness, whose skin bottle is empty, and who finds the wells dry, he must drink or die—he must have his God or faint. His *soul*, his very self, his deepest life, was insatiable for a sense of the divine presence. As the hart brays so his soul prays. Give him his God and he is as content as the poor deer which at length slakes its thirst and is perfectly happy; but deny him his Lord, and his heart heaves, his bosom palpitates, his whole frame is convulsed, like one who gasps for breath, or pants with long running. Dear reader, dost thou know what this is, by personally having felt the same? It is a sweet bitterness. The next best thing to living in the light of the Lord's love is to be unhappy till we have it, and to pant hourly after it—hourly, did I say? thirst is a perpetual appetite, and not to be forgotten, and even thus continual is the heart's longing after God. When it is as natural for us to long for God as for an animal to thirst, it is well with our souls, however painful our feelings. We may learn from this verse that the eagerness of our desires may be pleaded with God, and the more so, because there are special promises for the importunate and fervent.

2. "*My soul.*" All my nature, my inmost self. "*Thirsteth.*" Which is more than hungering; hunger you can palliate, but thirst is awful, insatiable, clamorous, deadly. O to have the most intense craving after the highest good! this is no questionable mark of grace. "*For God.*" Not merely for the temple and the ordinances, but for fellowship with God himself. None but spiritual men can sympathise with this thirst. "*For the living God.*" Because he lives, and gives to men the living water; therefore we, with greater eagerness, desire him. A dead God is a mere mockery; we loathe such a monstrous deity; but the ever-living God, the perennial fountain of life and light and love, is our soul's desire. What are gold, honour, pleasure, but dead idols? May we never pant for these. "*When shall I come and appear before God?*" He who loves the Lord loves also the assemblies wherein his name is adored. Vain are all pretences to religion where the outward means of grace have no attraction. David was never so much at home as in the house of the Lord; he was not content with private worship; he did not forsake the place where saints assemble, as the manner of some is. See how pathetically he questions as to the prospect of his again uniting in the joyous gathering! How he repeats and reiterates his desire! After his God, his Elohim (his God to be worshipped, who had entered into covenant with him), he pined even as the drooping flowers for the dew, or the moaning turtle for her mate. It were well if all our resortings to public worship were viewed as appearances before God, it would then be a sure mark of grace to delight in them. Alas, how many appear before the minister, or their fellow men, and think that enough! "To see the face of God" is a nearer translation of the Hebrew; but the two ideas may be combined—he would see his God and be seen of him: this is worth thirsting after!

Verse 3.—"*My tears have been my meat day and night.*" Salt meats, but healthful to the soul. When a man comes to tears, constant tears, plenteous tears, tears that fill his cup and trencher, he is in earnest indeed. As the big tears stand in the stag's eyes in her distress, so did the salt drops glitter in the eyes of David. His appetite was gone, his tears not only seasoned his meat, but became his only meat, he had no mind for other diet. Perhaps it was well for him that the heart could open the safety valves; there is a dry grief far more terrible than showery sorrows. His tears, since they were shed because God was blasphemed, were "honourable dew," drops of holy water, such as Jehovah putteth into his bottle. "*While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*" Cruel taunts come naturally from coward minds. Surely they might have left the mourner alone; he could weep no more than he

did—it was a supererogation of malice to pump more tears from a heart which already overflowed. Note how incessant was their jeer, and how artfully they framed it! It cut the good man to the bone to have the faithfulness of his God impugned. They had better have thrust needles into his eyes than have darted insinuations against his God. Shimei may here be alluded to who after this fashion mocked David as he fled from Absalom. He roundly asserted that David was a bloody man, and that God was punishing him for supplanting Saul and his house; his wish was father to his thought. The wicked know that our worst misfortune would be to lose God's favour, hence their diabolical malice leads them to declare that such is the case. Glory be to God, they lie in their throats, for our God is in the heavens, ay, and in the furnace too, succouring his people.

Verse 4.—"*When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.*" When he harped upon his woes his heart melted into water and was poured out upon itself. God hidden, and foes raging, a pair of evils enough to bring down the stoutest heart! Yet why let reflections so gloomy engross us, since the result is of no value: merely to turn the soul on itself, to empty it from itself into itself is useless, how much better to pour out the heart before the Lord! The prisoner's treadwheel might sooner land him in the skies than mere inward questioning raise us nearer to consolation. "*For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.*" Painful reflections were awakened by the memory of past joys; he had mingled in the pious throng, their numbers had helped to give him exhilaration and to awaken holy delight, their company had been a charm to him as with them he ascended the hill of Zion. Gently proceeding with holy ease, in comely procession, with frequent strains of song, he and the people of Jehovah had marched in reverent ranks up to the shrine of sacrifice, the dear abode of peace and holiness. Far away from such goodly company the holy man pictures the sacred scene and dwells upon the details of the pious march. "*With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*" The festive noise is in his ears, and the solemn dance before his eyes. Perhaps he alludes to the removal of the ark and to the glorious gatherings of the tribes on that grand national holy day and holiday. How changed his present place! For Zion, a wilderness; for the priests in white linen, soldiers in garments of war; for the song, the sneer of blasphemy; for the festivity, lamentation; for joy in the Lord, a mournful dirge over his absence.

"I sigh to think of happier days
When thou, O God, wast nigh,
When every heart was tuned to praise;
And none more blest than I."

When in a foreign land, amid the idolatries of Popery, we have felt just the same home-sickness for the house of the Lord which is here described; we have said "Ziona, Ziona, our holy and beautiful house, when shall I see thee again? Thou church of the living God, my mother, my home, when shall I hear thy psalms and holy prayers, and once again behold the Lord in the midst of his people?" David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of *the singing* of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettinesses of a quartett, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.

5. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" As though he were two men, the psalmist talks to himself. His faith reasons with his fears, his hope argues with his sorrows. These present troubles, are they to last for ever? The rejoicings of my foes, are they more than empty talk? My absence from the solemn feasts, is that a perpetual exile? Why this deep depression, this faithless fainting, this chicken-hearted melancholy? As Trapp says, "David chideth David out of the dumps;" and herein he is an example for all desponding ones.

To search out the cause of our sorrow is often the best surgery for grief. Self-ignorance is not bliss; in this case it is misery. The mist of ignorance magnifies the causes of our alarm; a clearer view will make monsters dwindle into trifles. "*Why art thou disquieted within me?*" Why is my quiet gone? If I cannot keep a public Sabbath, yet wherefore do I deny my soul her indoor Sabbath? Why am I agitated like a troubled sea, and why do my thoughts make a noise like a tumultuous multitude? The causes are not enough to justify such utter yielding to despondency. Up, my heart! What aileth thee? Play the man, and thy castings down shall turn to liftings up, and thy disquietudes to calm. "*Hope thou in God.*" If every evil be let loose from Pandora's box, yet is there hope at the bottom. This is the grace that swims, though the waves roar and be troubled. God is unchangeable, and therefore his grace is the ground for unshaken hope. If everything be dark, yet the day will come, and meanwhile hope carries stars in her eyes; her lamps are not dependent upon oil from without, her light is fed by secret visitations of God, which sustain the spirit. "*For I shall yet praise him.*" Yet will my sighs give place to songs, my mournful ditties shall be exchanged for triumphal pæans. A loss of the present sense of God's love is not a loss of that love itself; the jewel is there, though it gleams not on our breast; hope knows her title good when she cannot read it clear; she expects the promised boon though present providence stands before her with empty hands. "*For I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*" Salvations come from the propitious face of God, and he will yet lift up his countenance upon us. Note well that the main hope and chief desire of David rest in the smile of God. His face is what he seeks and hopes to see, and this will recover his low spirits, this will put to scorn his laughing enemies, this will restore to him all the joys of those holy and happy days around which memory lingers. This is grand cheer. This verse, like the singing of Paul and Silas, looses chains and shakes prison walls. He who can use such heroic language in his gloomy hours will surely conquer. In the garden of hope grow the laurels for future victories, the roses of coming joy, the lilies of approaching peace.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspout; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 *Yet* the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song *shall be* with me, *and* my prayer unto the God of my life.

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 *As* with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where *is* thy God?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

6. "*O my God, my soul is cast down within me.*" Here the song begins again upon the bass. So sweet an ending deserves that for the sake of a second hopeful close the Psalm should even begin again. Perhaps the psalmist's dejection continued, the spasm of despondency returned; well, then, he will down with his harp again, and try again its power upon himself, as in his younger days, he saw its influence upon Saul when the evil spirit came upon him. With God the song begins the second time more nearly than at first. The singer was also a little more tranquil. Outward expression of desire was gone; there was no

visible panting ; the sorrow was now all restrained within doors. Within or upon himself he was cast down ; and, verily, it may well be so, while our thoughts look more within than upward. If self were to furnish comfort, we should have but poor provender. There is no solid foundation for comfort in such fickle frames as our heart is subject to. It is well to tell the Lord how we feel, and the more plain the confession the better : David talks like a sick child to its mother, and we should learn to imitate him. "*Therefore will I remember thee.*" 'Tis well to fly to our God. Here is *terra firma*. Blessed downcasting which drives us to so sure a rock of refuge as thee, O Lord ! "*From the hill Mizar.*" He recalls his seasons of choice communion by the river and among the hills, and especially that dearest hour upon the little hill, where love spake her sweetest language and revealed her nearest fellowship. It is great wisdom to store up in memory our choice occasions of converse with heaven ; we may want them another day, when the Lord is slow in bringing back his banished ones, and our soul is aching with fear. "His love in times past" has been a precious cordial to many a fainting one ; like soft breath it has fanned the smoking flax into a flame, and bound up the bruised reed. Oh, never-to-be-forgotten valley of Achor, thou art a door of hope ! Fair days, now gone, ye have left a light behind you which cheers our present gloom. Or does David mean that even where he was he would bethink him of his God ; does he declare that, forgetful of time and place, he would count Jordan as sacred as Siloa, Hermon as holy as Zion, and even Mizar, that insignificant rising ground, as glorious as the mountains which are round about Jerusalem ! Oh ! it is a heavenly heart which can sing—

> "To me remains nor place nor time ;
> My country is in every clime ;
> I can be calm and free from care
> On any shore, since God is there.
>
> Could I be cast where thou art not,
> That were indeed a dreadful lot,
> But regions none remote I call,
> Secure of finding God in all."

7. "*Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.*" Thy severe dealings with me seem to excite all creation to attack me ; heaven, and earth, and hell, call to each other, stirring each other up in dreadful conspiracy against my peace. As in a waterspout, the deeps above and below clasp hands, so it seemed to David that heaven and earth united to create a tempest around him. His woes were incessant and overwhelming. Billow followed billow, one sea echoed the roaring of another ; bodily pain aroused mental fear, Satanic suggestions chimed in with mistrustful forebodings, outward tribulation thundered in awful harmony with inward anguish : his soul seemed drowned as in a universal deluge of trouble, over whose waves the providence of the Lord moved as a watery pillar, in dreadful majesty inspiring the utmost terror. As for the afflicted one he was like a lonely bark around which the fury of a storm is bursting, or a mariner floating on a mast, almost every moment submerged. "*All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*" David thought that every trouble in the world had met in him, but he exaggerated, for *all* the breaking waves of Jehovah have passed over none but the Lord Jesus ; there are griefs to which he makes his children strangers for his love's sake. Sorrow naturally states its case forcibly ; the mercy is that the Lord after all hath not dealt with us according to our fears. Yet what a plight to be in ! Atlantic rollers sweeping in ceaseless succession over one's head, waterspouts coming nearer and nearer, and all the ocean in uproar around the weary swimmer ; most of the heirs of heaven can realise the description, for they have experienced the like. This is a deep experience unknown to babes in grace, but common enough to such as do business on great waters of affliction : to such it is some comfort to remember that the waves and billows are the Lord's, "*thy* waves and *thy* billows," says David, they are all sent, and directed by him, and achieve his designs, and the child of God knowing this, is the more resigned.

8. "*Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime.*" Come what may there shall be "a certain secret something" to sweeten all. Lovingkindness is a noble life-belt in a rough sea. The day may darken into a strange and untimely midnight, but the love of God ordained of old to be the portion of the elect, shall be by sovereign decree meted out to them. No day shall ever dawn on an heir of grace and find him altogether forsaken of his Lord: the Lord reigneth, and as a sovereign he will with authority command mercy to be reserved for his chosen. "*And in the night.*" Both divisions of the day shall be illuminated with special love, and no stress of trial shall prevent it. Our God is God of the nights as well as the days; none shall find his Israel unprotected, be the hour what it may. "*His song shall be with me.*" Songs of praise for blessings received shall cheer the gloom of night. No music sweeter than this. The belief that we shall yet glorify the Lord for mercy given in extremity is a delightful stay to the soul. Affliction may put out our candle, but if it cannot silence our song we will soon light the candle again. "*And my prayer unto the God of my life.*" Prayer is yoked with praise. He who is the living God, is the God of our life, from him we derive it, with him in prayer and praise we spend it, to him we devote it, in him we shall perfect it. To be assured that our sighs and songs shall both have free access to our glorious Lord is to have reason for hope in the most deplorable condition.

9. "*I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me.*" Faith is allowed to enquire of her God the causes of his displeasure, and she is even permitted to expostulate with him and put him in mind of his promises, and ask why apparently they are not fulfilled. If the Lord be indeed our refuge, when we find no refuge, it is time to be raising the question, "Why is this?" Yet we must not let go our hold, the Lord must be "*my*" rock still; we must keep to him as our alone confidence, and never forego our interest in him. "*Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*" He who condescends to be pleaded with by Abraham, his friend, allows us to put to him the question that we may search out the causes of his severity towards us. Surely he can have no pleasure in seeing the faces of his servants stained and squalid with their tears; he can find no content in the harshness with which their foes assail them. He can never take pleasure in the tyranny with which Satan vexes them. Why then does he leave them to be mocked by his enemies and theirs? How can the strong God, who is as firm and abiding as a rock, be also as hard and unmoved as a rock towards those who trust in him? Such enquiries humbly pressed often afford relief to the soul. To know the reason for sorrow is in part to know how to escape it, or at least to endure it. Want of attentive consideration often makes adversity appear to be more mysterious and hopeless than it really is. It is a pitiable thing for any man to have a limb amputated, but when we know that the operation was needful to save life, we are glad to hear that it has been successfully performed; even thus as trial unfolds, the design of the Lord in sending it becomes far more easy to bear.

10. "*As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me.*" Cruel mockeries cut deeper than the flesh, they reach the soul as though a rapier were introduced between the ribs to prick the heart. If reproaches kill not, yet they are killing, the pain caused is excruciating. The tongue cuts to the bone, and its wounds are hard to cure. "*While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*" This is the unkindest cut of all, reflecting as it does both upon the Lord's faithfulness and his servant's character. Such was the malice of David's foes, that having thought of the cruel question, they *said* it, said it *daily*, repeated *it to him*, and that for a length of time; surely the continual yapping of these curs at his heel was enough to madden him, and perhaps would have done so had he not resorted to prayer and made the persecutions of his enemies a plea with his Lord.

11. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?*" In the rehearsal of his sorrow, he finds after all no sufficient ground for being disquieted. Looked in the face, his fears were not so overwhelming as

they seemed when shrouded in obscurity. "*Hope thou in God.*" Let the anchor still keep its hold. God is faithful, God is love, therefore there is room and reason for hope. "*Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*" This is the same hopeful expression as that contained in verse five, but the addition of "*and my God*" shows that the writer was growing in confidence, and was able defiantly to reply to the question, "Where is thy God?" Here, even here, he is, ready to deliver me. I am not ashamed to own him amid your sneers and taunts, for he will rescue me out of your hands. Thus faith closes the struggle, a victor in fact by anticipation, and in heart by firm reliance. The saddest countenance shall yet be made to shine, if there be a taking of God at his word and an expectation of his salvation.

"For yet I know I shall him praise
Who graciously to me,
The health is of my countenance,
Yea, mine own God is he."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*Sons of Korah.*" Who were *the sons of Korah?* These opinions have more or less prevailed. One is that they sprang from some one of that name in the days of David. Mudge and others think that the sons of Korah were a society of musicians, founded or presided over by Korah. Others think that the sons of Korah were the surviving descendants of that miserable man who, together with two hundred and fifty of his adherents, who were princes, perished when "the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, together with Korah." In Numbers xxvi. 11, we read: "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." They had taken the warning given, and had departed from the tents of these wicked men. Numbers xvi. 24, 26. It must be admitted that the name *Korah* and the patronymic *Korahite* are found in the Scriptures in a way that creates considerable doubt respecting the particular man from whom the Korahites are named. See 1 Chron. i. 35; ii. 43; vi. 22, 54; ix. 19; xxvi. 1; 2 Chron. xx. 19. Yet the more common belief is that they descended from him who perished for his gainsaying. This view is taken by Ainsworth with entire confidence, by Gill, and others. Korah, who perished, was a Levite. Whatever may have been their origin, it is clear *the sons of Korah* were a Levitical family of singers. Nothing, then, could be more appropriate than the dedication of a sacred song to these very people—*William S. Plumer.*

Title.—"*Sons of Korah.*" The "*Korah*" whose "*sons*" are here spoken of, is the Levite who headed the insurrection against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. Numbers xvi. We find his descendants existing as a powerful Levitical family in the time of David, at least, if they are to be identified, as is probable, with the Korahites mentioned in 1 Chron. xii. 6, who, like our own warlike bishops of former times, seem to have known how to doff the priestly vestment for the soldier's armour, and whose hand could wield the sword as well as strike the harp. The Korahites were apart of the band who acknowledged David as their chief, at Ziklag; warriors "whose faces," it is said, "were like the faces of lions, and who were (for speed) like gazelles upon the mountains." According to 1 Chron. ix. 17—19, the Korahites were in David's time, keepers of the threshold of the tabernacle; and still earlier, in the time of Moses, watchmen at the entrance of the camp of the Levites. In 1 Chron. xxvi. 1—19, we find two branches of this family associated with that of Merari, as guardians of the doors of the Temple. There is probably an allusion to this their office, in Psalm lxxxiv. 10. But the Korahites were also celebrated musicians and singers; see 1 Chron. vi. 16—33, where Heman, one of the three famous musicians of the time, is said to be a Korahite (comp. 1 Chron. xxv). The musical reputation of the family continued in the time of

Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 19), where we have the peculiar doubly plural form בְּנֵי הַקָּרְחִים, "*Sons of the Korahites.*"—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Title.—"*Sons of Korah.*" Mediæval writers remark how here, as so often, it was the will of God to raise up saints where they could have been least looked for. Who should imagine that from the posterity of him who said, "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Aaron," should have risen those whose sweet Psalms would be the heritage of the church of God to the end of time?—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 1.—"*The hart panteth after the water brooks.*" And here we have started up, and sent leaping over the plain another of Solomon's favourites. What elegant creatures these gazelles are, and how gracefully they bound! . . . The sacred writers frequently mention gazelles under the various names of harts, roes, and hinds. . . . . I have seen large flocks of these panting harts gather round the water-brooks in the great deserts of Central Syria, so subdued by thirst that you could approach quite near them before they fled.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 1.—Little do the drunkards think that take so much pleasure in frequenting the houses of Bacchus, that the godly take a great deal more, and have a great deal more joy in frequenting the houses of God. But 'tis a thing that God promised long ago by the prophet: "Then will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." Isaiah lvi. 7. And methinks, I hear the willing people of God's power, merrily calling one to another in the words of Micah iv. 2, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." How is a godly man ravished with "the beauty of holiness," when he is at such meetings! How was holy David taken with being in the house of God at Jerusalem! insomuch, that if he were kept from it but a little while, his soul panted for it, and longed after it, and fainted for lack of it, as a thirsty hart would do for lack of water! "*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*" The poor disconsolate captives preferred it to the best place in their memory. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (Psalm cxxxvii. 5); nay, they preferred it to their chiefest joy: "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy," verse 6. There was no place in the world that David regarded or cared to be in in comparison of it. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm lxxxiv. 10), insomuch, that he could find it in his heart, nay, and would choose, if he might have his desire, to spend all his days in that house. Psalm xxvii. 4.—*Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 1.—The soul strongly desires acquaintance with God here in his ordinances. Chrysostom's very rhetorical upon the text, and tells us how that David, like a lover in absence, must express his affection; as they have their dainty sighs, and passionate complaints, their loving exclamations, and sundry discoveries of affection; they can meet with never a tree, but in the bark of it they must engrave the name of their darling, Δεινὸς δ' ὁ ἔρως ὥσπες ὁ κιττὸς ἀυτὸν ἐκ πάσης ἀναδῆσαι προφάσεως; 'twill twine upon every opportunity, as the Moralist speaks. And the true lovers of God, they are always thinking upon him, sighing for him, panting after him, talking of him, and (if 'twere possible) would engrave the name of the Lord Jesus upon the breasts of all the men in the world. Look upon David, now a banished man, and fled from the presence of Saul, and see how he behaves himself: not like Themistocles or Camillus, or some of those brave banished worthies. He does not complain of

the ungratefulness of his country, the malice of his adversaries, and his own unhappy success. No, instead of murmuring, he falls a panting, and that only after his God. He is banished from the sanctuary, the palace of God's nearest presence, and chiefest residence; he can't enjoy the beauty of holiness, and all other places seem to him but as the tents of Kedar. He is banished from the temple, and he thinks himself banished from his God, as it is in the following words, "*When shall I come and appear before God?*" The whole stream of expositors run this way, that it is meant of his strong longing to visit the Temple, and those amiable courts of his God, with which his soul was so much taken.—*Nathanael Culverwel's* "*Panting Soul*," 1652.

Verses 1, 2, 3, are an illustration of the frequent use of the word Elohim in the second book of Psalms. We give Fry's translation of the first three verses.—

As the hart looketh for the springs of water,
So my soul looketh for thee, O Elohim.

My soul is athirst for Elohim for the living El:
When shall I go and see the face of Elohim?

My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they say to me continually, Where is thy Elohim?

Verse 2.—"*My soul thirsteth for God*," etc. See that your heart rest not short of Christ in any duty. Let go your hold of no duty until you find something of Christ in it; and until you get not only an *handful*, but an *armful* (with old Simeon, Luke ii. 28); yea, a *heartful* of the blessed and beautiful babe of Bethlehem therein. Indeed you should have commerce with heaven, and communion with Christ in duty, which is therefore called *the presence of God*, or your appearing before him. Exodus xxiii. 17, and Psalm xlii. 2. Your duties then must be as a bridge to give you passage, or as a boat to carry you over into the bosom of Christ. Holy Mr. Bradford, Martyr, said he could not leave *confession* till he found his heart touched and broken for sin; nor *supplication*, till his heart was affected with the beauty of the blessings desired; nor *thanksgiving*, till his soul was quickened in return of praises; nor *any duty*, until his heart was brought into a duty frame, and something of Christ was found therein. Accordingly Bernard speaks, *Nunquam abs te absque te recedam Domine:* I will never depart (in duty) from thee without thee, Lord. Augustine said he loved not Tully's elegant orations (as formerly) because he could not find *Christ* in them: nor doth a gracious soul love empty duties. Rhetorical flowers and flourishes, expressions without impressions in praying or preaching, are not true bread, but a tinkling cymbal to it, and it cannot be put off with the empty spoon of aëry notions, or lovely (that are not also lively) songs: if Christ talk with you in the way (of duty) your heart will burn within you. Luke xxiv. 16, 32.—*Christopher Ness's* "*Chrystal Mirrour*," 1679.

Verse 2.—"*The living God.*" There are three respects especially in which our God is said to be the "*living God.*" First, *originally*, because he only hath life in himself, and of himself, and all creatures have it from him. Secondly, *operatively*, because he is the only giver of life unto man. Our life, in the threefold extent and capacity of it, whether we take it for natural, or spiritual, or eternal, flows to us from God. Thirdly, God is said to be the "*living God*" by way of *distinction*, and in opposition to all false gods.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—A wicked man can never say in good earnest, "*When shall I come and appear before God?*" because he shall do so too soon, and before he would, as the devils that said Christ came "to torment them before their time." Ask a thief and a malefactor whether he would willingly appear before the judge. No, I warrant you, not he; he had rather there were no judge at all to appear before. And so is it with worldly men in regard of God, they desire rather to be hidden from him.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 2.—"*Come and appear before God.*" When any of us have been at church, and waited in the sanctuary, let us examine what did we go thither to

see: a shadow of religion? An outside of Christian forms? A graceful orator? The figures and shapes of devotion? Surely then we might with as much wisdom, and more innocence, have gone to the wilderness "to see a reed shaken with the wind." Can we say as the Greeks at the feast (John xii. 21), "We would see Jesus?" Or, as Absalom (2 Sam. xiv. 32), "It is to little purpose I am come to Jerusalem if I may not see the King's face." To little purpose we go to church, or attend on ordinances, if we seek not, if we see not God there.—*Isaac Watts, D.D.*, 1674—1748.

Verse 2.—If you attempt to put a little child off with toys and fine things, it will not be pleased long, it will cry for its mother's breast; so, let a man come into the pulpit with pretty Latin and Greek sentences, and fine stories, these will not content a hungry soul, he must have the sincere milk of the word to feed upon.—*Oliver Heywood.*

Verse 2.—"*When shall I come and appear before God?*"—

While I am banish'd from thy house
I mourn in secret, Lord;
"When shall I come and pay my vows,
And hear thy holy word?"

So while I dwell in bonds of clay,
Methinks my soul shall groan,
"When shall I wing my heavenly way
And stand before thy throne?"

I love to see my Lord below,
His church displays his grace;
But upper worlds his glory know
And view him face to face.

I love to worship at his feet,
Though sin attack me there,
But saints exalted near his seat
Have no assaults to fear.

I'm pleased to meet him in his court,
And taste his heavenly love,
But still I think his visits short,
Or I too soon remove.

He shines, and I am all delight,
He hides and all is pain;
When will he fix me in his sight,
And ne'er depart again?

Isaac Watts, from his Sermons.

Verse 3.—"*My tears have been my meat day and night.*" The psalmist could eat nothing because of his extreme grief.—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 3.—"*They say unto me.*" It is not only of me, but to me; they spake it to his very face, as those who were ready to justify it and make it good, that God had forsaken him. Backbiting argues more baseness, but open reproach carries more boldness, and shamelessness, and impudence in it; and this is that which David's enemies were guilty of here in this place.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 3.—"*Where is thy God?*" God's children are impatient, as far as they are men, of reproaches; but so far as they are Christian men, they are impatient of reproaches in religion; "*Where is now thy God?*" They were not such desperate Atheists as to think there was no God, to call in question whether there were a God or no, though, indeed, they were little better; but they rather reproach and upbraid him with his singularity, *where* is *thy* God? You are one of God's darlings; you are one that thought nobody served God but you; you are one that will go alone—*your* God! So this is an ordinary reproach, an ordinary part for wicked men to cast at the best people, especially when they are in misery. What is become of your profession now? What is become of your forwardness and strictness now? What is become of your God that you bragged so of, and thought yourselves so happy in, as if he

had been nobody's God but yours? We may learn hence the disposition of wicked men. It is a character of a poisonful, cursed disposition to upbraid a man with his religion.

But what is the scope? The scope is worse than the words "*where is thy God?*" The scope is to shake his faith and his confidence in God, and this is *that* which touched him so nearly while they upbraided him. For the devil knows well enough that as long as God and the soul join together, it is in vain to trouble any man, therefore he labours to put jealousies, to accuse God to man, and man to God. He knows there is nothing in the world can stand against God. As long as we make God our confidence, all his enterprises are in vain. His scope is, therefore, to shake our affiance in God. "*Where is thy God?*" So he dealt with the head of the church, our blessed Saviour himself, when he came to tempt him. "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." Matt. iv. 3. He comes with an "*if*," he laboured to shake him in his Sonship. The devil, since he was divided from God himself eternally, is become a spirit of division; he labours to divide even God the Father from his own Son; "*If thou be the Son of God?*" So he labours to sever Christians from their head Christ. "*Where is thy God?*" There was his scope, to breed division if he could, between his heart and God, that he might call God into jealousy, as if he had not regarded him: thou hast taken a great deal of pains in serving thy God; thou seest how he regards thee now; "*Where is thy God?*" —*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 3.—How powerfully do the scoffs and reproaches of the ungodly tend to shake the faith of a mind already dejected! How peculiarly afflictive to the soul that loves God, is the dishonour cast upon him by his enemies!—*Henry March, in* "*Sabbaths at Home*," 1823.

Verse 3.—"*Where is thy God?*"

"Where is now thy God!" Oh, sorrow!
Hourly thus to hear him say,
Finding thus the longed-for morrow,
Mournful as the dark to day.
Yet not thus my soul would languish,
Would not thus be grieved and shamed,
But for that severer anguish,
When I hear the Lord defamed.

"Where is now thy God!" Oh, aid me,
Lord of mercy, to reply—
"He is HERE—though foes invade me,
Know his outstretched arm is nigh."
Help me thus to be victorious,
While the shield of faith I take;
Lord, appear, and make thee glorious:
Help me for thy honour's sake.

Henry March.

Verse 4.—"*When I remember these things*," etc.—To a person in misery it is a great increase of misery to have been once happy: it was to David an occasion of new tears when he remembered his former joys. Time was, says the poor soul, when I thought of God with comfort, and when I thought of him as my own God; and to lose a God that I once enjoyed is the loss of all my losses, and of all my terrors the most terrible. Time was when I could go and pray to him, and ease myself in prayer; but now I have no boldness, no hope, no success in prayer. I cannot call him *my Father* any more. Time was when I could read the Bible and treasure up the promises, and survey the land of Canaan as my own inheritance; but now I dare not look into the Word lest I read my own condemnation there. The Sabbath was formerly to me as one of the days of heaven, but now it is also, as well as the rest, a sad and a mournful day. I formerly rejoiced in the name of Christ, "I sat under his shadow." Cant. ii. 3. I was in his eyes as one that found favour; but now my soul is like the deserts

of Arabia, I am scorched with burning heat. From how great a height have I fallen! How fair was I once for heaven and for salvation, and now am like to come short of it! I once was flourishing in the courts of the Lord, and now all my fruit is blasted and withered away: "his dew lay all night upon my branches," but now I am like the mountains of Gilboa, no rain falls upon me. Had I never heard of heaven I could not have been so miserable as I now am: had I never known God, the loss of him had not been so terrible as now it is like to be. Job xxix. 2, 3.—*Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—The blessedness of even the remembrance of divine worship is so great, that it can save the soul from despair.—*J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 4.—"*I pour out my soul.*" The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 4.—"*I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*" The gracious God is pleased to esteem it his glory to have many beggars thronging at the beautiful gate of his temple, for spiritual and corporal alms. What an honour is it to our great Landlord that multitudes of tenants flock together to his house to pay their rent of thanks and worship for their all which they hold of him! How loud and lovely is the noise of many golden trumpets! Good Lord, what an echo do they make in heaven's ears! When many skilful musicians play in concert with well tuned and prepared instruments the music cannot but be ravishing to God himself.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 4.—Do but consider David's tears and grief for want of, and his fervent prayers for the fruition of, public ordinances even then, when he had opportunities for private performances; and surely thou wilt esteem the ministry of the Word no mean mercy. See his sorrow when he was driven from God's sanctuary. "*When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.*" "*My soul is poured out;*" that is, I am overwhelmed with grief, and ever ready to die when I compare my present condition with my former happiness in the fruition of religious assemblies. There is an elegancy in the phrase "*poured out;*" the word is applied to water, or any liquid thing, and in Scripture signifieth abundance. Joel ii. 28. My life is ready to be poured out as water upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, when I remember my former mercies, and consider my present misery. . . . The loss of his father, mother, wives, children, lands, liberty—nay, of his very life, would not have gone so near his heart as the loss of public ordinances. As his sorrow was great for the want, so was his suit most earnest for the enjoyment of them. How many a prayer doth he put up for the liberty of the tabernacle! Psalm xliii. 3, 4, and xxvii. 4, 8. It is the one thing, the principal thing which he begs of God.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 4.—The bias of the soul is remarkably shown by the objects of regretful recollection.—*Henry March.*

Verse 4.—"*With a multitude that kept holy day.*"

> Though private prayer be a brave design
> Yet public hath more promises, more love:
> And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign.
> We all are but cold suitors; let us move
> Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;
> Pray with the most: for where most pray, is heaven.
>
> *George Herbert, in "The Temple."*

Verse 5.—See also on verse 11, and Psalm xliii. verse 5.

Verse 5.—"Why *art thou cast down, O my soul?*" Athanasius counselled his friend, that when any trouble should fall upon him, he should fall presently to the reading of this Psalm; for there was a way, he thought, of curing by the like, as well as by the *contrary:* for 'tis observed indeed that when two instruments are tuned to the same unison, if you touch the strings of

the one, the strings of the other will move too, though untouched, if placed at a convenient distance. That therefore you may try the same experiments upon yourselves, do but set your affections for a tune in the same key in which these words were spoken ; if really you *feel* none, imagine some affliction laid upon you ; when you have done so, that you may be the more fully moved, place your attention at a convenient distance, look narrowly on this holy prophet, observe how he retires himself, shuts out the world, calls his sad soul to as sad a reckoning : *Quare tam tristis?* O my soul ! thou that wert infused to give me life ; nay, says Philo the Jew, a spark, a beam of the divinity, thou, which shouldst be to this dark body of mine as the sun is to the earth, enlightening, quickening, cheering up my spirits ; tell me, why art *thou* clouded ? why art *thou* cast down ? . . . .

Think of this, ye that feel the heaviness of your soul ; think of it, ye that do not, for ye may feel it. Know there is a sorrow "that worketh repentance not to be repented of." Know again there is a sorrow "that worketh death." Remember that there were tears that got sinful Mary heaven ; remember again, there were tears that got sinful Esau *nothing*. For as in martyrdom, it is not the sword, the boiling lead, or fire, not *what* we suffer, but *why*, that makes us martyrs ; so in our sorrows, it is not how deep they wound, but *why*, that justifies them. Let every one, therefore, that hath a troubled heart, ask his soul the "*Why :*" "*Why art thou cast down?*" Is it not for thine own sins, or the sins of others ? Take either of them, thine eyes will have a large field to water. Is it for that thou hast been a child of wrath, a servant of the devil ? Is it for that thou art a candle set in the wind, blown at by several temptations ? or is it for that thou wouldst be freed from them ? "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar !" Psalm cxx. 5. Art thou troubled as St. Augustine was, when he read that the way to heaven was narrow, the number small that travelled thither ? Or hast thou put on St. Bernard's resolution, who had made a compact with his soul, never to joy till he had heard his Saviour call him, "Come, ye blessed," nor never to leave sorrowing till he had escaped the bitter sentence, "Go, ye cursed ?" If any of these be the "*Why*," the ground of thy sorrows, if such thoughts have *cast thee down ;* know, that thy Saviour hath already blessed thee, for, "Blessed are they that mourn." The angels are thy servants, they gather thy tears ; God is thy treasurer, he lays them up in his bottle ; the Holy Ghost is thy comforter, he will not leave thee. Fear not, then, to be thus "*cast down*," fear not to be thus *disquieted within thee.—Brian Duppa* (*Bishop*), 1588—1662, *in a Sermon entitled* "*The Soule's Soliloquie.*"

Verse 5.—"*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" Why, or what may be the reason, that this text is three times used in this Psalm and in the next ? whereas you do not find two verses of the same length used in all the Book of Psalms besides, except in Psalm cvii., where is often repeated, "O that men would praise the Lord," etc. Now, surely, the frequent mention of this text and words doth argue and note unto us the weightiness of the matter. . . . . .

Wicked men oppressed David, and the devil tempted him ; yet he chides his own heart and nothing else. David did not chide at Saul, nor chide at Absalom ; but he chides and checks his own heart. "Why are thou cast down, O my soul ?" Though the devil and wicked men, the one do tempt, the other do oppress as instruments of punishment for sin ; yet we with David are to chide our own hearts.

Consider, what though in our translations the words are translated and rendered passively, "*Why art thou cast down?*" yet, in the original, they are rendered actively ; we read it, "*Why art thou cast down?*" etc. ; but in the original it is read, כה־תשתוחחי נפשי וכה־תהמי עלי "*Why bowest* (or pressest) *thou down thyself, my soul? and why tumultest thou against me?*" As Arias Montanus, *Cur humiliasti te? Cur deprimes te anima mea?* So Lorinus, Prov. xii. 25. And the words so read, they do not intimate thus much, that God's own people may be cast down too much for the sense of sin, and they are most

active in their own down-casting. It is not God nor the devil that cast thee down; but *Why dost thou cast thyself down?* to create more trouble on thyself than either God doth inflict or the devil tempt thee to.—*Christopher Love, in "The Dejected Soul's Cure,"* 1657.

Verse 5.—"*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" Consider but this, how much there is of God in the affliction. 1. Came it not without *God's privity?* Why art thou troubled, then? Thy Father knowing of it would have stopped its course if it had been best for thee. 2. Came it not *without his command?* Why art thou troubled? It is the cup that thy Father hath given thee, and wilt thou not drink it? 3. Is it thy Father's will that thou shouldst suffer, and shall it be thy humour to rebel? 4. Hath God done *no more than he might do?* Why dost thou murmur, as if he had done thee wrong? 5. Is it a piece of his *wise acting?* Why dost thou exalt thy foolish will above his infinite wisdom? 6. Is his way *a way of mercy?* Why does thy mutinous spirits tumble at it, as a rough way? 7. Is the thing *good* that is befallen thee? Why dost thou quarrel as if it were evil? 8. Is it *less than men suffer*, than his own people, yea, than his own Son hath suffered, and hast thou cause to complain? 9. Is it but *thy merit?* and less than that, too; and shall the living man complain for the punishment of his sin? 10. Is it *in measure*, ordered with care? (1) by the physician's hand; and (2) a little draught, and (3) proportioned to thy strength; (4) measured out according to the proportion of strength and comfort he intends to measure thee out, to bear it withal? Why are thou cast down? Why art thou disquieted? Is the end and fruit of it but to make thee white, and purify thee? to purge thy sin past, and to prevent it for the time to come? and dost thou find a present fruit in it? Dost thou find that now thou art turned into a chalk-stone; thy groves and images—those corruptions which did attend thee while thou wert in prosperity, and which would attend thee if thou hadst those good things which thou wantest, and art disquieted for; and if those evils which thou feelest or fearest were far from thy sense and fear, would still attend thee—that those do not now stand up? Lift up thy head, Christian! say to thy soul, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?*" Meditate what there is of God in the cause of thy disquietments.—*John Collinge* (1623—1690) *in "A Cordial for a Fainting Soule,"* 1652.

Verse 5.—"*Why art thou disquieted?*" more literally, *tumultuated*, a word frequently applied to the roaring and tumult and tossing of the sea. See Isaiah xvii. 12; Jer. v. 22; vi. 23; li. 55.—*Henry March.*

Verse 5.—"*Hope thou in God.*" I shall show what powerful influence *hope* hath on the Christian in affliction, and how. First, it stills and silenceth him under affliction. It keeps the king's peace in the heart, which else would soon be in an uproar. A hopeless soul is clamorous: one while it chargeth God, another while it reviles his instruments. It cannot long rest, and no wonder, when hope is not there. Hope hath a rare art in stilling a froward spirit, when nothing else can; as the mother can make the crying child quiet by laying it to the breast, when the rod makes it cry worse. This way David took, and found it effectual; when his soul was unquiet by reason of his present affliction, he lays it to the breast of the promise: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God." And here his soul sweetly sleeps, as the child with the breast in his mouth; and that this was his usual way, we may think by the frequent instances we find; thrice we find him taking this course in two Psalms, xlii. and xliii. . . . . Secondly, this hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called "the rejoicing of hope," Heb. iii. 6. And hope never affords more joy than in affliction. It is on a watery cloud that the sun paints those curious colours in the rainbow. . . . . There are two graces, which Christ useth above any other, to fill the soul with joy—faith and hope, because these two fetch all their wine of joy without door. Faith tells the soul what Christ hath done for

it; and so comforts it; hope revives the soul with the news of what Christ will do: both draw at one tap—Christ and his promise.—*Condensed from William Gurnall.*

Verse 5.—"*Hope thou in God.*" The word which is here rendered "*hope*" denotes that *expectation* which is founded on faith in God, and which leads the soul to *wait* upon him. The idea is beautifully expressed in Psalm xxxix. 7. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee."—*Henry March.*

Verse 5.—"*I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*" When it may be said, "He whom God loveth is sick," then it may be said, "This sickness is not unto death;" and though it be to the first death, yet not to the second. Who would think when Jonah was in the sea (Jonah iii.), that he would preach at Nineveh? Who would think when Nebuchadnezzar was in the forest (Dan. iv.), that he should reign again in Babel? Who would think when Joseph was banished of his brethren, that his brethren should seek unto him like his servants? Who would think when Job scraped his sores upon the dunghill, all his houses were burned, all his cattle stolen, and all his children dead, that he should be richer than ever he was? These are the acts of mercy which make the righteous sing, "The Lord hath triumphed valiantly." Exodus 15—21.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 5.—"*I shall yet praise him.*" David's mind is upon the *duty* more than upon the *mercy;* upon the *duty*, as it is a matter of *grace*, more than upon the *mercy*, as it is a matter of *sense.* And, therefore, by a happy mistake, his tongue slips, as men are wont to do in such cases, and he puts one for the other; when he should say, *I shall receive mercy from God,* he says, "*I shall give praise to him.*"—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 5.—He is the skilful physician, who at the same time that he evacuates the disease, doth also comfort and strengthen nature; and he the true Christian, that doth not content himself with a bare laying aside evil customs and practices, but labours to walk in the exercise of the contrary graces. Art thou discomposed with impatience, haunted with a discontented spirit under any affliction? Think it not enough to silence thy heart from quarrelling with God, but leave not till thou canst bring it sweetly to rely on God. Holy David drove it thus far, he did not only chide his soul for being disquieted, but he charges it to trust in God.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 5.—There was one Alice Benden, who, among others, was imprisoned for religion in Canterbury Castle; but after awhile, by the bishop's order, she was let down into a deep dungeon, where none of her friends could come at her. There she was fed with an halfpenny bread, and a farthing beer a day, neither would they allow her any more for her money. Her lodging was upon a little straw, between a pair of stocks and a stone wall. This made her grievously to bewail and lament her estate, reasoning with herself, why her Lord God did in so heavy a wise afflict her, and suffered her thus to be sequestered from the sweet society of her loving prison-fellows. In this extremity of misery, and in the midst of these dolorous mournings she continued, till on a night, repeating that of the psalmist: "*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so cast down within me? Still trust in God,*" etc.; and, *God's right hand can change all this,* etc.; she received comfort in the midst of her sorrows, and so continued joyful to the time of her release.—*Samuel Clarke's "Mirrour."*

Verses 5, 11.—In case thou art at any time oppressed with sorrows, ask thy heart and soul that question which David did in the like case twice in one Psalm: "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?*" and certainly the soul would return answer, My distress of sadness springs from my unbelief. You may know the disease by the cure, in the very next words, "*O put thy trust in God; hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*" All sorrow of heart springs principally from our unbelief, not from the greatness of other evils; I mean, *destructive* sorrow, for godly sorrow is a

friend to godly joy. It is not so much the weight of the burthen, as the soreness of the back, that troubles the poor beast: so it is not so much the weight of outward evils, as the inward soreness of a galled conscience, not purified nor healed by faith, that vexeth and troubleth the poor creature.—*Matthew Lawrence, in "The Use and Practice of Faith,"* 1657.

Verses 5, 11.—As afflictions do proceed from ourselves, they may be called troubles, or perturbations; for the best man doth sometimes cause this bad liquor to boil out of his own bowels. David, not once, but often, hath cried out, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?*" And show me the man that annoyeth and troubleth not himself in vain, because with patience he doth not tarry the Lord's leisure? The foolish bird, who, being in a room whose door is locked, and the casements shut, beateth herself against the wall and windows, breaking her feathers and bruising her body, whereas, would she stay till the passages were by the keeper opened, she might depart, being not at all wounded; even so falleth it out with us: for when the Lord doth shut us up, and straiten our liberty for a time, we would fain make way for ourselves, having many devices in our hearts to break through the walls of his providence; whereas, if we would stay his leisure, depend on his promise, and submit ourselves to be disposed of by his hand, we might with more ease endure this prison, and with less hurt at the last be set at liberty. For God is in one mind, and who can change him? He will bring to pass that thing that he hath decreed upon us.—*John Barlow's Sermon*, 1618.

Verses 5, 11.—If you would get assurance, spend more time in strengthening your evidences for heaven, than in questioning of them. It is the great fault of many Christians they will spend much time in questioning, and not in strengthening their comforts. They will reason themselves into unbelief, and say, Lord, why should I believe? Why should I take hold of a promise that am so unholy and so unmortified a creature? And so by this they reason themselves to such a pass that they dare not lay hold upon Christ, whereas it should be your work to reason yourselves into Christ as much as you can. Labour to strengthen your comforts, and reason thus, Why should I not believe in Christ? Thus David did. Psalm xlii. "*Why art thou troubled, O my soul, and why art thou cast down within me?*" Is not the mercy of God more than sin in the creature? Is not there free grace where there is guilt? Are not there pardoning mercies where condemnation is deserved? You should reason up your comforts rather than reason them down, and spend more time in strengthening than in questioning of them. You would count him a very unwise man that hath a lease of so much land, and he himself shall create scruples and doubts, and shall use no means to make his title good. And truly many Christians are as unwise for heaven. They have, as I may say, good bond and seal that God will bring them to heaven, and yet they will question and cavil themselves into unbelief. Beloved, this should not be, but you ought rather to strengthen your comforts than question them.—*Christopher Love.*

Verse 6.—"*O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee.*" "Because I am very low in spirit, am deeply sorrowful, *therefore* will I remember thee. I will remember how condescending thou art to thy 'poor and afflicted people;' how ready to receive them when deserted or cast out by men; how kind and patient to hear their complaint when they pour out the soul before thee. I will remember thy lovingkindness to *me* in seasons past; how thou hast looked on my distress, hast heard the voice of my supplications, hast delivered me from my trials, or helped me to bear their burden, strengthening me with strength in my soul. I will remember all that I have enjoyed of thy presence when waiting on thee in thy house, or when celebrating thy praises there in company with thy 'saints, the excellent of the earth.' I will remember what thou ART; how meet an object for the trust of a desolate being like myself! For though I am poor, thou art rich; though I am weak, thou art mighty; though I am miserable, thou art happy. I will

remember that thou art *my* God. That thou hast manifested thyself to my soul, that thou hast enabled me to choose thee for my portion, that I have trusted in thee, and have never been confounded. I will remember that word of promise on which thou hast caused me to hope, to which thou hast ever been faithful throughout all the past, and *will* be, as I truly believe, even unto the end." Oh, how happy, even in the midst of their unhappiness, are they, who in their trials, can thus take shelter in God !—*Henry March.*

Verse 6.—"My *God.*" Astonishing expression ! Who shall dare to say to the Creator of the ends of the earth, the Majesty in the heavens, "*My God*"? An exile, a wanderer, an outcast ; a man forsaken, despised, reviled ; a soul cast down and disquieted : *he* shall dare. By what right? Of covenant.—*Henry March.*

Verse 6.—"*Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.*" It is remarkable what course the psalmist took to regain comfort ; he would remember three experiments of his goodness—"the land of *Jordan*," the land "of the *Hermonites*," and "the hill *Mizar*." First, will I remember the land *Jordan ;* that is, I will remember the great goodness of God in drying up the river Jordan, that so the tribes of Israel might pass over to the promised land : why, God that hath been good, will be good. Then, I will remember the land of the *Hermonites ;* in that land were Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, defeated ; that you read of in Joshua xii. 1, 2. "Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto Mount Hermon." *Mizar*, some think to be a little hill near Mount Sinai, where the law was given. I will remember God's goodness, in giving a law to his people. Here David would call to remembrance the goodness of God of old, to regain to him comfort and quietness in his mind.—*Christopher Love.*

Verse 6.—"*The Hermons*," or the peaks or ridges of Hermon, the plural being used either because of the *two* peaks of the mountain (Wilson, "*Land of the Bible*"), or as I think probably, of the whole range of its snowy heights.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 6.—"*The Hermons*," *i.e.*, as some suppose, Mount Hermon, and the other mountains upon that side of the river, just as Baalim means Baal, and other idols worshipped with him ; or more probably Mount Hermon considered not as a single eminence, but a chain or range, like the Alps, the Alleghanies, etc.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 6.—"*From the hill.*" He that has a rich life of past experience is thereby placed upon an eminence from which he may take a happy view of the path lying before him.—*J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 7.—"*Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.*" Here he has conjoined two awful and terrific phenomena of nature. It is a fact well ascertained by the evidence of travellers, that the falling of waterspouts is not uncommon on the coast of Judea. It should seem that they are occasioned by the congregating of great masses of cloud, whose waters concentrating to a point, pour themselves down in a tremendous column, accompanied with a roaring noise. Now, the image conceived in the mind of the psalmist seems to be that of the rushing of this vast waterspout down into the sea, already agitated, and increasing the turbulence and disorder of its waves. An awful picture ! Especially if there be added to it the ideas of a black tempestuous sky, and the deafening roar occasioned by the tumult. What would be the situation of a vessel in the midst of such a tempest, the deluge pouring down from above, and all around her the furious ocean heaving its tremendous surges—how ungovernable, how helpless, how next to impossible that she should escape foundering except by some almost miraculous interference ! Yet to such a situation does David here compare the state of his soul when submersed, as it were, under a sea of afflictions ; "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over

me." How pungent must his sense of grief have been to occasion him to make use of such a comparison, so strongly expressive of the utmost danger and terror!—*Henry March.*

Verse 7.—"*Deep calleth unto deep,*" etc. The abyss above calls on the abyss below, in the voice of the droppings of thy waterspouts.—*Targum.*

Verse 7.—"*Deep calleth unto deep.*" So let prayer unto prayer, and faith unto faith, and one grace to the exercise of another. If we cannot prevail with God it may be the first time, yet we may the second; or if not then, the third.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 7.—"*Deep calleth unto deep.*" What's that? Why, it is expressed in the verse before: "*O God,*" says he, "*my soul is cast down within me.*" "*Down,*" that is *deep* into the jaws of distrust and fear. And, Lord, my soul in this *depth* of sorrow, calls for help to thy *depth* of mercy. For though I am sinking and am going down, yet not so low but that thy mercy is yet underneath me. Do, of thy compassions, open those everlasting arms, and catch him that has no help or stay in himself. For so it is with one that is falling into a *well* or a *dungeon.*—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 7.—Here the psalmist feels the spirit of bondage, which is wrath and fear; and he prays for the joy of God's salvation, and to be upheld by God's free spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love and power. He complains of "*deep calling unto deep.*" A soul in the horrible pit hears little else but the calls of law and justice for vengeance, which are always answered again by the accusations of Satan and conscience. The storms of Sinai, like a *waterspout* at sea, threaten the earthen vessel with a deluge of wrath, which would soon drown it in destruction and perdition. These waves of real, and some imaginary, displeasure (no less terrible than real), rolling over the poor creature, are ready to send the bark to the bottom. This is the terrible way in which some fallen and backsliding souls are purged and reclaimed, and especially such as have brought public scandal upon the gospel, and church of Christ.—*William Huntington* (1744—1813) *in* "*Contemplations of the God of Israel.*"

Verse 7.—"*Thy waterspouts.*" Dr. Boothroyd translates צִנּוֹרֶיךָ, "*thy cataracts.*" In justification of which translation, he observes that the situation of David suggested this forcible image. He saw the torrents falling from the precipices, and heard them resounding, and as if calling to one another for assistance; so, says he, all thy waves, that is, afflictions and troubles, come upon me and overwhelm me.—*John Morison.*

Verse 7.—"*Waterspouts.*" Look at those clouds which hang like a heavy pall of sackcloth over the sea, along the western horizon. From them, on such windy days as these, are formed *waterspouts*, and I have already noticed several incipient "spouts" lengthening downward from their lower edge. These remarkable phenomena occur most frequently in spring, but I have also seen them in autumn. They are not accompanied with much rain; and between the dark stratum above and the sea, the sky is clear and bright. Here and there fragments of black vapour, shaped like long funnels, are drawn down from the clouds towards the sea, and are seen to be in violent agitation, whirling around on themselves as they are driven along by the wind. Directly beneath them, the surface of the sea is also in commotion by a whirlwind, which travels on in concert with the spout above. I have often seen the two actually unite in mid-air, and rush toward the mountains, writhing, and twisting, and bending, like a huge serpent, with its head in the clouds and its tail on the deep.

They make a loud noise, of course, and appear very frightful. "*Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me,*" said David, when his soul was cast down within him. But, though formidable in appearance, they do very little injury. I have never heard of more than one instance in which they proved destructive even to boats, though the sailors are extremely afraid of them. As soon as they approach the shore, they dissolve and disappear. That kind of waterspout which bursts on the

mountains, generally in the dry months of summer, does immense mischief. In a few minutes the wadies along its track are swollen into furious rivers, which sweep away grain, olives, raisins, and every other produce of the farmer. I have frequently known them to carry off and drown flocks of sheep and goats, and even cows, horses, and their owners also.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 7.—"*All thy waves and thy billows.*"

Deep to deep incessant calling,
Tossed by furious tempests' roll,
Endless waves and billows falling,
Overwhelm my fainting soul.
Yet I see a Power presiding
Mid the tumult of the storm,
Ever ruling, ever guiding,
Love's intentions to perform.
Yes, mid sorrows most distressing,
Faith contemplates thy design,
Humbly bowing, and confessing
All the waves and billows THINE.

Henry March.

Verse 7.—"*All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*"

Wide o'er misfortune's surging tide
Billows succeeding billows spread;
Should one, its fury spent, subside,
Another lifts its boisterous head.

Æschylus in "The Seven Chiefs against Thebes."

Verse 8.—"*Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness.*" His expression is remarkable; he does not say simply that the Lord will bestow, but, "*command his loving kindness.*" As the gift bestowed is grace—free favour to the unworthy; so the manner of bestowing it is sovereign. It is given by decree; it is a royal donative. And if *he* commands the blessing, who shall hinder its reception?—*Henry March.*

Verse 8.—'Tis all one to a godly man, *night* or *day*. For what *night* can there be to him who hath God always with him, who is a *sun* to comfort him, as well as a shield to protect him (Ps. lxxxiv. 11); and *the light of whose countenance*, if it be but very little, is more comfortable than all things else whatsoever that the *day* can bring with it. He can say, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me (Mic. vii. 8); and "the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." Ps. xviii. 28. To tell you the truth, I think the *night* is the merriest time that the godly man hath, and the saddest for the wicked man (who, though he make use of *darkness* to hide his sin, yet is he afraid, because of that very thing in which his safety consists). For if a man be merry in good company, he must needs be more merry when he enjoys it better, and there is less to disturb his mirth. So as it is with a godly man in the *night*, when the greatest part of his hindrances are removed, and he can "delight himself in the Almighty" without disturbance. Job xxvii. 10. David says that the Lord would indeed "*command his lovingkindness in the daytime*," but, "*in the night* (says he) *his song shall be with me*"—"his song," as I think, not of *thanksgiving*, but of *joy and exultation*, such as God uses to give at that time. Job. xxxv. 10. In the *daytime* the soul is so taken up with base employments, so distracted with variety of sensible objects, and so busied with work for the body, that either she hath no leisure at all to do her own work (such as this joy is as much as anything) or she cannot do it so well as she would, or so well as she could *in the night*, when she hath less to do. I doubt not but the worldly and carnal man, now that I am talking so much of *night*, and sleep, will be ready to say that I do but *dream*, and to answer me as the fellow did the hunter, when he bade him hear "what heavenly music his dogs made." For I know he counts the music and songs that we speak of, nothing but a frenzy, or a fancy at least, such as mad and diseased people have in their

brain, while they imagine it to be in the air. But, as Peter said of those upon whom the Holy Ghost fell, "These men are not drunk, as ye suppose;" so may I reply to such men, No such matter, the godly are not mad, as ye suppose, for their songs are not works of their own fancy, not made of their own head, but set for them by God himself, "who giveth songs in the night." Job xxxv. 10.—*Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 8.—"*And my prayer unto the God of my life.*" Here may be seen that David's religion was a religion of prayer *after* deliverance, as well as before. The selfish who cry out in trouble will have done with their prayers, when the trouble is over. With David it was the very reverse. Deliverance from trouble would strengthen his confidence in God, embolden his addresses to him, and furnish him with new arguments. . . . . There is great *need* of prayer after deliverance; for the time of deliverance is often a time of temptation; the soul being elated, and thrown off its guard. At such seasons much of the joy that is felt may be merely natural, as David's would probably be when rescued from that corroding care which injures the body as well as distresses the soul. There is danger of mistaking; of supposing it to be all spiritual, and hence of imagining the soul to be in a higher state of grace than it really is, and so, of being imperceptibly drawn into a state of false security. There is then especial need of that prayer. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." And with some peculiarly, who being of a sanguine constitution of mind, are in times of enjoyment, soon puffed up and brought into danger.—*Henry March.*

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—Your song and your prayer must be directed to God as "*the God of your life.*" You do not own him as God, except you own and adore him as your all sufficient good, and that "fulness which filleth all in all." You detract from the glory of his Godhead, if you attribute not this to him; and if, accordingly, as one that cannot live without him, you do not seek union with him, and join yourself to him, and then rejoice and solace yourself in that blessed conjunction.—*John Howe.*

Verse 9.—"*God my rock.*" David was a fugitive, with little means of defence, and continually pursued by enemies who were powerful and numerous. The country in which he wandered was mountainous, and he often sought and found shelter on the tops of precipitous rocks, or in their natural hollows or excavated caves. Thus the idea of shelter and defence being associated in his mind with that of a rock, how natural that he should apply the term to God, and when seeking him as his refuge and helper, should address him by that appellation. . . . . "*Why hast thou forgotten me?*" Not that he supposed he was literally forgotten of God, so as to be given up and abandoned by him; because he had still sufficient trust in his faithfulness to seek him for a refuge, and to hope in his mercy. His expression is to be regarded as the language of feeling, not of judgment. He felt, he seemed, as one forgotten by God. Those visits of love, those manifestations of favour with which he had formerly been indulged, and which then seemed to him to be so many tokens of the divine remembrance, were now withheld, now when, on account of his distress, they appeared so unspeakably more needful and desirable; whence it was that he felt as one forgotten.—*Henry March.*

Verse 10.—"*Mine enemies.*" It is strange that *he* should have enemies, that was so harmless a man that when they were sick and distressed, he prayed for them, and put on sackcloth for them, as it is, Psalm xxxv. This compassionate sweet-natured man, yet, notwithstanding, you see he had enemies, and enemies that would discover themselves to reproach him, and that bitterly; in the bitterest manner, they reproach him in his religion. We may be armed by this observation against the scandal of opposition—that if we meet with enemies in the world, we should not be much offended at it; grieve we may, but wonder we need not. Was there ever any that did more good than our Saviour Christ? "He went about doing good." Acts x. 38. He did never a miracle that was

harmful (but only of the swine that were drowned in the sea, and that was their own fault), but he went about doing all the good he could; yet, notwithstanding, we see what malicious opposites he had. That that is true of the head must be true in the members. Therefore we should rejoice in our conformity to Christ, if it be in a good cause, that we find enemies and opposition. The devil is not made a Christian yet, and he will never be made good, for he is *in termino*, as we say, he is in his bounds, his nature is immovable; he is in hell in regard of his estate, though he be loose to do mischief. Now, until the devil be good, God's children shall never want enemies; and he will never be good; therefore, though there were good kings and good governors over all the world, yet good men shall never want enemies as long as the devil is alive, as long as he hath anything to do in the world. Enemies, therefore, we must look for, and such enemies as will not conceal their malice neither; for that were something, if they would suffer their malice to boil and concoct in their own hearts, but that will not be, but "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak."—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 10.—"*They say daily unto me.*" Here's their constancy and perseverance in this their carriage and language, it is *daily*, or *all the day*, כָּל־הַיּוֹם. It is not only for a fit and away, but it is their frequent and continual practice; it's every, and it's all the day; they begin in the morning, and they hold out still till night as unquiet persons use to do; and they begin the week with it, and so they continue till the end; he could never come into their company or near them, but he had such language from them.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 10.—"*Where is thy God?*" David might rather have said to them, Where are your eyes? where is your sight? for God is not only in heaven, but in me. Though David was shut out from the sanctuary, yet David's soul was a sanctuary for God; for God is not tied to a sanctuary made with hands. God hath two sanctuaries, he hath two heavens—the heaven of heavens and a broken spirit. God dwelt in David as in his temple. God was with David and in him; and he was never more with him, nor never more in him than in his greatest afflictions. They wanted eyes, he wanted not God. Though sometimes God hide himself, not only from the world but from his own children, yet he is there; howsoever their sorrow is such that it dims their sight (as we see in Hagar), so that they cannot see him for the present, he sometimes looks in their face, as we see in Mary's case. She could not see Christ distinctly, but thought him to be the gardener. There is a kind of concealment awhile in heavenly wisdom, yet notwithstanding, God is with his children always, and they know it by faith though not by feeling always. . . . . Therefore, it was an ignorant question of them to ask, *Where is thy God?* It showed that they were ignorant of the passages of God's dealing with his children, as indeed none are greater atheists than your scoffers. *Where is thy God?* as if God had been only a God of observation, to be observed outwardly in all his passages towards his children; whereas, as I said, he is a God hiding himself ofttimes; and he shows himself in contrary conditions most of all, most comfortably. His work is by contraries. But these carnal men were ignorant of the mysteries of religion, and the mysteries of divine providence towards God's children. Therefore, their question savours of their disposition, *Where is now thy God?*—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 10.—"*Where is thy God?*" It is the deriding question which persecutors put to the saints in the time of their trials and troubles, *Ubi Deus?* "Where is now your God?" But they may return a bold and confident answer, *Hic Deus*, "Our God is here," our God is nigh unto us, our God is round about us, our God is in the midst of us, our God has given us his promise "that he will never leave us nor forsake us." Heb. xiii. 5. In every trouble, in every danger, in every death, the Lord will be sure to keep us company. God will bear his children company, not only whilst they are in a delightful paradise, but also when they are in a howling wilderness. Hosea ii. 14. When a company of poor Christians were going into banishment, one standing by to see them pass along

said, that it was a very sad condition that those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions of the beasts of the fields. True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed, if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, for God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of his presence whithersoever they go, his presence is infinite, and filleth all places. The Rabbins put *Makom*, which signifies *place*, among the names of God; Bythner brings them in expounding that text (Esther iv. 14), thus: "Deliverance shall arise from another place," that is, from God. Now, they called God *place*, because he is in every place, filling heaven and earth with his presence.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 10.—Forest-flies, small as they are, drive the noble war-horse mad; therefore David says, "*As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*"—*Frederick William Robertson*, 1851.

Verse 11.—Imitate here the example of David, instead of yielding to a vague grief: cite your soul; *enquire* of it the particular cause of your sorrow: different remedies will be requisite according to the different sources of your distress; and be careful that you trifle not with God, and your comfort, and your salvation, while you enquire of your soul, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" Be impartial, there is another and more solemn judgment to succeed: be persevering, like the psalmist, return, again and again to the investigation: be prayerful; self-love, or the delusions of your heart, may otherwise deceive you. Pray then to God, to "search you, and see if there be any wicked way in you."—*Henry Kollock, D.D., in* "*Sermons*," etc. 1822.

Verse 11.—"*Hope.*" Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.—*Samuel Smiles, LL.D.*

Verse 11.—"*God . . . . is the health of my countenance.*" The health of David's countenance was not in his countenance, but *in his God*, and this makes his faith silence his fears, and so peremptorily resolve upon it, that there is a time coming (how near soever he now lies to the grave's mouth) when he "*shall yet praise him.*" The health and life of thy grace lie both of them, not in thy grace, saith faith, but *in God*, who is *thy* God, therefore I shall yet live and praise him. I do not wonder that the weak Christian is melancholy and sad, when he sees his sickly face in any other glass than this.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 11.—"*The health of my countenance.*" The countenance is often a true index to the mind. In the present awakening in religion, nothing is more remarkable than the sad or joyous looks of those whom God has spiritually exercised. It is easy to see who are sad, and who happy. There is nothing new in this; the psalmist says, "My soul is cast down within me." Therefore had he a dejected countenance; but said he, "Send thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; then will I go unto God, my exceeding joy. . . . . And he shall be *the health of my countenance.*" In his sorrow, the face of Jesus was marred more than any man's, and his visage more than the sons of men. The martyr Stephen was so filled with the sight of Jesus, that in the midst of his persecutors, with death in prospect, he had a face which "shone as the face of an angel." My friend, how is it with thee? Is thy countenance sad? or doth it shine with the joy of the Lord, telling the true tale of thy life and lot?—*J. Denham Smith.* 1860.

Verse 11.—Hast thou seen the sun shine forth in February, and the sky blue, and the hedgerows bursting into bud, and the primrose peeping beneath the bank, and the birds singing in the bushes? Thou hast thought that spring was already come in its beauty and sweet odours. But a few days, and the clouds returned, and the atmosphere was chilled, and the birds were mute, and snow was on the ground, and thou hast said that spring would never come. And thus sometimes the young convert finds his fears removed, and the comforts of the gospel shed abroad in his heart, and praise and thanksgiving, and a new

song put in his mouth. And he deems unadvisedly that his troubles are past for ever. But awhile, and his doubts return, and his comforts die away, and his light is taken from him, and his spirit is overwhelmed, and he is fain to conclude that salvation and all its blessings are not for him. But the spring, though late, shall break at last. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?*"—*H. G. Salter's* "*Book of Illustrations,*" 1840.

Verse 11.—His arguments and motives hereunto are impregnated with very great sense and strength; and urged upon himself as the just rate thereof. "*Hope thou in God.*" For he is 1. "*God.*" 2. "*Thy God.*" 3. "*The health of thy countenance,*" and 4. *One whom thou shalt* (certainly and for ever) *praise as such.* And 5. Do it *yet*, as lamentable and hopeless as thy case appears at present through seeming difficulties or unlikelihoods. God and ourselves well understood, deeply considered, and skilfully urged and improved, give gracious hearts the best encouragements and supports under the severest accidents of time. And they will very strangely animate our hopes in God under our sorest troubles and dejections. David had (1) confidence in God; and (2) reasons for it; and (3) skill and a heart to urge them. When he reviewed himself, he saw that his soul was gracious; and so he knew God valued it. It was bent for praising God; and so he knew that he should have an opportunity and cause to do it, through some signal favours from him. He had an interest in God; and he would neither lose it nor neglect it, and he had great experience of God's former mercies, and he would not forget them. And when he thinks on God, then praises must be thought on too, and everything relating to it, and all the divine perfections, within the circumference of his knowledge, must have their fresh remembrances and powerful sense revived upon his own heart.—*Matthew Sylvester* (1636–1708), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 11.—The soul, when once greatly disturbed, is often not soon calmed, on account of infirmities and remaining corruptions.—*Henry March.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The longing heart and the panting hart compared.

Verses 1, 2.—Those who have enjoyed the presence of God in the public ordinances of religion will greatly desire, if deprived of them, to be favoured with them again. . . . . Prevention from attending the public ordinances of God's house may be made the means of great benefit to the soul. I. By renewing our relish for the provisions of the Lord's house, which so soon and so often palls. II. By making us to prize the means of grace more highly. There is, through human degeneracy, a proneness to value things less, however excellent in themselves, because of their being common, or plentiful, or of easy attainment. III. By driving us more directly from God.—*H. March.*

Verses 1—3.—The home-sickness of the soul. What awakens it in the soul? To what is it directed, or does it point or tend? Wherewith can it be satisfied? By the bitter, but ofttimes wholesome food of tears.—*J. P. Lange.*

Verse 2.—I. What thirsts? "my soul." II. For what? "for God." III. In what way? "when shall I come." Or, the cause, incentives, excellences, and privileges of spiritual thirst.

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—The true view of public worship.

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—Appearance before God here and hereafter.—*Isaac Watts, D.D., Two Sermons.*

Verse 3.—The believer's Lent, and its salt meats. I. What causes the sorrow? II. What will remove it? III. What benefit will come of it?

Verses 3, 10.—The carriage of David's enemies. I. The *nature* of it, and that was "*reproach.*" II. The *expression* of it, "*They say unto me.*" III. The *constancy* of it: "*daily,*" or, *all the day long.* IV. The *specification* of it, in a scornful and opprobrious question: "*Where is* (*now*) *thy God?*"—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 4.—I. It is common for the mind, in seasons of sorrow, to seek relief from the present in recollections of the past. II. In recollections of past enjoyments, those that relate to social worship will be peculiarly dear to the servant of God. III. Man is a social being, hence he derives help from united worship—*H. March.*

Verse 4.—"*I pour out my soul in me.*" The uselessness of mistrustful introspection.

Verse 4.—"*I had gone with the multitude,*" etc. Company, if it be that which is good, is a very blessed and comfortable accommodation in sundry respects. I. It is an exercise of men's faculties, and the powers and abilities of the mind. II. It is a fence against danger, and a preservative against sadness and various temptations. III. An opportunity of doing more good.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 4.—"*I had gone,*" etc. Sunny memories, their lessons of gratitude and hope.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Not Chaucer's tales of the Canterbury pilgrims, but David's tales of the Jerusalem pilgrims.

Verse 4.—"*With the voice,*" etc. Congregational singing defended, extolled, discriminated, and urged.

Verse 5.—Sorrow put to the question, or the Consolatory Catechism.

Verse 5.—The sweetness, safety, and rightness of hope *in* God. Good grip for the anchor.

Verse 5.—The music of the future, "*I shall yet praise him.*"

Verse 5.—"*The help of his countenance,*" or the sustaining power of God's presence.

Verse 5.—"*Why art thou cast down?*" I. The mind, even of a holy man, may be unduly cast down and disquieted. II. In cases of undue dejection and disquietude, the proper remedy is to expostulate with the soul, and to direct it to the *only true source* of relief. III. Expostulation with the soul in times of distress, is then productive of its proper end, when it leads to an immediate application to God.—*H. March.*

Verse 5.—An emphasis of *enquiry or examination;* David calls himself to account for his present passion and trouble of mind. An emphasis of *reproof or objurgation;* David chides and rebukes himself for his present distemper. "*Why art thou thus?*"—*Thomas Horton.*

Verses 5 with 11, or *help* and *health.*

Verse 6.—"*Remember thee.*" The consolation derivable from thoughts of God.

Verse 6.—"*Therefore will I remember thee.*" There are two ways of understanding this; each of them instructive and profitable. . . . I. It may be considered as an expression of *determined remembrance of God* should he ever be found in such places and conditions. Believers can suppose the worst, and yet hope for the best. II. The language may be considered as an expression of *encouragement derived from reflection.* He had been in these situations and circumstances, and had experienced in them displays of divine providence and grace.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 6.—Ebenezers, many, varied, remembered, helpful.

Verse 7.—"*Deep calleth unto deep.*" See Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 865.

Verse 7.—"*Deep calleth unto deep.*" One evil inviting another. I. The *variety* of evils—one evil to another. II. The *conjunction* of evils—one evil with another. III. The *connexion* of evils, or dependence and mutual reference—one evil upon another.—*T. Horton.*

Verse 7.—The threefold depth which the saints and servants of God are subject to here in this life. I. The depth of *temptation.* II. The depth of *desertion.* III. The depth of *affliction and human calamities.*—*T. Horton.*

Verses 7, 8.—In seasons of affliction the servants of God will be distinguished from others by their ready perception and acknowledgment of the hand of God in their trials.—*H. March.*

Verse 8.—Daily mercy and nightly song; the mercies of sunshine and shade.

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—The blessed alternation between praise and prayer.

Verse 8.—"*God of my life.*" Author, sustainer, comforter, object, crown, consummation.

Verse 8.—"*The God of my life.*" There is a threefold life whereof we partake, and God is the God of each unto us. First, the life of *nature;* secondly, the life of *grace;* thirdly, the life of *glory.*—*T. Horton.*

Verse 9.—"*God my rock.*" Appellations of God, suited to circumstances.—*H. March.*

Verse 9.—"*My rock.*" See Keach in his metaphors.

Verse 9.—I. Why *thou?* II. Why *I?* III. Why *he?* It is a *why* to all three. To *God*, "*Why hast thou forgotten me?*" To *David* himself, "*Why do I go mourning?*" To David's *adversary*, whoever he was, "*Why does the enemy oppress me?*"—*T. Horton.*

Verse 10.—The most grievous of taunts.

Verse 11.—"*My God.*" I. It's a word of *interest*—"*My God,*" as in covenant with him. II. A word of *compliance*—"*My God,*" as submitting to him. III. A word of affection—"*My God,*" as taking delight, and rejoicing in him.—*T. Horton.*

Verse 11.—A catechism, a consolation, a commendation.

Verse 11.—I. David's *experience* of God. "*He is the health,* or *help of my countenance.*" II. His *relation* to God, and *interest* in him—"*And my God.*"—*T. Horton.*

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM.

A Practical Exposition of the Forty-second Psalm, in ten Sermons, in *Choice and Practical Exposition on four select Psalms.* Psalms IV., XLII., LI., LXIII. By Thomas Horton, D.D. 1675. Folio.

Sabbaths at Home: or, a help to their right improvement; founded on the Forty-second and Forty-third Psalms. Intended for the use of pious persons when prevented from attending the public worship of God. By Henry March. London: 1823.

On the eleventh verse of this Psalm there are the following works :—

Twelve Sermons, in "*A Cordial for a Fainting Soule.*" By John Collings. 1652. Part II., pp. 133—206.

Thirteen Sermons in the works of William Bridge (1600—1670), entitled, "*A Lifting Up for the Downcast.*" Vol. II. of the edition of 1845.

Comfort and Counsel for Dejected Souls. By John Durant. 8vo. 1651.

The Soul's Conflict with Itself. By Richard Sibbes. (Numerous old editions). In Sibbes' Works, Nichol's Puritan Series, vol. I.

PSALM XLIII.

SUBJECT.—*On account of the similarity of the structure of this Psalm to that of Psalm forty-two, it has been supposed to be a fragment wrongly separated from the preceding song; but it is always dangerous to allow these theories of error in Holy Scripture, and in this instance it would be very difficult to show just cause for such an admission. Why should the Psalm have been broken? Its similarity would have secured its unity had it ever been part and parcel of the forty-second. Is it not far more likely that some in their fancied wisdom united them wrongly in the few MSS. in which they are found as one? We believe the fact is that the style of the poetry was pleasant to the writer, and therefore in after life he wrote this supplemental hymn after the same manner. As an appendix it needed no title. David complains of his enemies, and asks the privilege of communion with God as his surest deliverance from them.*

DIVISION.—*The psalmist cries to God in prayer, verses* 1—3. *Promises praise in the anticipation of an answer, verse* 4, *and chides himself for his despondency, verse* 5.

EXPOSITION.

JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

2 For thou *art* the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

1. "*Judge me, O God.*" Others are unable to understand my motives, and unwilling to give me a just verdict. My heart is clear as to its intent, and therefore I bring my case before thee, content that thou wilt impartially weigh my character, and right my wrongs. If thou wilt judge, thy acceptance of my conduct will be enough for me; I can laugh at human misrepresentation if my conscience knows that thou art on my side; thou art the only one I care for; and besides, thy verdict will not sleep, but thou wilt see practical justice done to thy slandered servant. "*And plead my cause against an ungodly nation.*" One such advocate as the Lord will more than suffice to answer a nation of brawling accusers. When people are ungodly, no wonder that they are unjust; those who are not true to God himself cannot be expected to deal rightly with his people. Hating the King they will not love his subjects. Popular opinion weighs with many, but divine opinion is far more weighty with the gracious few. One good word from God outweighs ten thousand railing speeches of men. He bears a brazen shield before him whose reliance in all things is upon his God; the arrows of calumny fall harmlessly from such a buckler. "*O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.*" Deceit and injustice are boon companions: he who fawns will not fear to slander. From two such devils none can deliver us but God. His wisdom can outwit the craft of the vilest serpent, and his power can overmatch the most raging lion. Whether this was Doeg or Ahithophel is small matter, such double distilled villains are plentiful, and the only way of dealing with them is to refer the matter to the righteous Judge of all; if we try to fight them with their own weapons, we shall suffer more serious injury from ourselves than from them. O child of God, leave these thine

enemies in better hands, remembering that vengeance belongeth not to thee, but to thy Lord. Turn to him in prayer, crying, "O deliver me," and ere long you shall publish abroad the remembrance of his salvation.

2. "*For.*"—Here is argument, which is the very sinew of prayer. If we reasoned more with the Lord we should have more victories in supplication. "*Thou art the God of my strength.*" All my strength belongs to thee—I will not, therefore, use it on my own behalf against my personal foes. All my strength comes from thee, I therefore seek help from thee, who art able to bestow it. All my strength is in thee, I leave therefore this task of combating my foes entirely in thy hands. Faith which leaves such things alone is wise faith. Note the assurance of David, "*thou art,*" not I hope and trust so, but I know it is so; we shall find confidence to be our consolation. "*Why dost thou cast me off?*" Why am I treated as if thou didst loathe me? Am I become an offence unto thee? There are many reasons why the Lord might cast us off, but no reason shall prevail to make him do so. He hath not cast off his people, though he for awhile treats them as cast-offs. Learn from this question that it is well to enquire into dark providences, but we must enquire of God, not of our own fears. He who is the author of a mysterious trial can best expound it to us.

> "Blind unbelief is sure to err,
> And scan his work in vain;
> God is his own interpreter,
> And he will make it plain."

"*Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*" Why do I wander hither and thither like a restless spirit? Why wear I the weeds of sorrow on my body, and the lines of grief on my face? Oppression makes a wise man mad; why, Lord, am I called to endure so much of it for so long a time? Here again is a useful question, addressed to the right quarter. The answer will often be because we are saints, and must be made like our Head, and because such sorrow is chastening to the spirit, and yieldeth comfortable fruit. We are not to cross-question the Lord in peevishness, but we may ask of him in humility; God help us to observe the distinction so as not to sin through stress of sorrow.

3. "*O send out thy light and thy truth.*" The joy of thy presence and the faithfulness of thy heart; let both of these be manifest to me. Reveal my true character by thy light, and reward me according to thy truthful promise. As the sun darts forth his beams, so does the Lord send forth his favour and his faithfulness towards all his people; and as all nature rejoices in the sunshine, even so the saints triumph in the manifestation of the love and fidelity of their God, which, like the golden sunbeam, lights up even the darkest surroundings with delightful splendour. "*Let them lead me.*" Be these my star to guide me to my rest. Be these my Alpine guides to conduct me over mountains and precipices to the abodes of grace. "*Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.*" First in thy mercy bring me to thine earthly courts, and end my weary exile, and then in due time admit me to thy celestial palace above. We seek not light to sin by, nor truth to be exalted by it, but that they may become our practical guides to the nearest communion with God: only such light and truth as are sent us from God will do this, common light is not strong enough to show the road to heaven, nor will mere moral or physical truths assist to the holy hill; but the light of the Holy Spirit, and the truth as it is in Jesus, these are elevating, sanctifying, perfecting; and hence their virtue in leading us to the glorious presence of God. It is beautiful to observe how David's longing to be away from the oppression of man always leads him to sigh more intensely for communion with God.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who* is the health of my countenance, and my God.

4. "*Then will I go unto the altar of God.*" If David might but be favoured with such a deliverance as would permit his return, it would not be his own house or heritage which would be his first resort, but to the altar of God his willing feet should conduct him. His whole heart would go as a sacrifice to the altar, he himself counting it his greatest happiness to be permitted to lie as a burnt offering wholly dedicated to the Lord. With what exultation should believers draw near unto Christ, who is the antitype of the altar! clearer light should give greater intensity of desire. "*Unto God my exceeding joy.*" It was not the altar as such that the psalmist cared for, he was no believer in the heathenism of ritualism: his soul desired spiritual fellowship, fellowship with God himself in very deed. What are all the rites of worship unless the Lord be in them; what, indeed, but empty shells and dry husks? Note the holy rapture with which David regards his Lord! He is not his *joy* alone, but his *exceeding* joy; not the fountain of joy, the giver of joy, or the maintainer of joy, but that joy itself. The margin hath it, "The gladness of my joy," *i.e.*, the soul, the essence, the very bowels of my joy. To draw near to God, who is such a joy to us, may well be the object of our hungering and thirsting. "*Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee.*" His best music for his best love. When God fills us with joy we ought ever to pour it out at his feet in praise, and all the skill and talent we have should be laid under contribution to increase the divine revenue of glory. "*O God, my God.*" How he dwells upon the name which he loves so well! He already harps on it as though his harp music had begun. What sweeter sounds can music know than these four words? To have God in possession, and to know it by faith, is the heart's heaven—a fulness of bliss lies therein.

5. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" If God be thine, why this dejection? If he uplifts thee, why art thou so near the ground? The dew of love is falling, O withering heart, revive. "*And why art thou disquieted within me?*" What cause is there to break the repose of thy heart? Wherefore indulge unreasonable sorrows, which benefit no one, fret thyself, and dishonour thy God? Why overburden thyself with forebodings? "*Hope in God,*" or "*wait for God.*" There is need of patience, but there is ground for hope. The Lord cannot but avenge his own elect. The heavenly Father will not stand by and see his children trampled on for ever; as surely as the sun is in the heavens, light must arise for the people of God, though for awhile they may walk in darkness. Why, then, should we not be encouraged, and lift up our head with comfortable hope? "*For I shall yet praise him.*" Times of complaint will soon end, and seasons of praise will begin. Come, my heart, look out of the window, borrow the telescopic glass, forecast a little, and sweeten thy chamber with sprigs of the sweet herb of hope. "*Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*" My God will clear the furrows from my brow, and the tear marks from my cheek; therefore will I lift up my head and smile in the face of the storm. The Psalm has a blessed ending, such as we would fain imitate when death puts an end to our mortal existence.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is evidently a continuation or supplement to the preceding. In some MSS. of Kennicott and de Rossi's, they are united, and make one Psalm.—*George Phillips, B.D.*

Verse 1.—"*Judge me, O God, and plead my cause,*" etc.—Believers may appeal to God's justice, and plead God's righteousness. I. Touching suffering wrongs of men. II. Touching sin in relation to God's wrath. I. Touching suffering wrongs of men, believers may appeal upon these three grounds: 1. The injustice that men do to believers, is as well against *God's just nature*, as against the believers' ease. So their appeals to God are agreeable to God's enmity against injustice; therefore, his enmity concurs with their appeals. Romans i. 18. 2. Justice in men is according to God's nature, as well as for the believer's welfare, and, therefore, the disposition and inclination of God's nature concurs with their prayers for deliverance. Psalm xi. 7; Luke xxiii. 6, 7. 3. Such wrong God who do wrong his people (2 Chron. xiv. 11; Zech. ii. 8; Acts ix. 4, 5); so that in deliverance God vindicates himself as well as the believers. II. Touching sin in relation to God's wrath, a true believer may plead God's justice or righteousness on these three grounds: 1. Christ our Advocate or Attorney so pleads. John xvii. 24, etc. Now, the client may plead the same as the advocate, seeing it is in relation to the same party and the same issue. 2. Christ hath satisfied God's justice, so that on Christ was laid all the sins of all believers. He was "wounded" for them. Now, God cannot in justice punish twice; therefore, seeing Christ was wounded, believers must be healed. Isaiah liii. 3. Believers have God's righteousness imputed to them (2 Cor. v.); therefore, God must deal with believers as he will deal with his own righteousness.

Useful is this doctrine two ways. I. For terror to the enemies of believers. How many prevailing cries to the justice of God are against such enemies? 1. Their own sins cry. 2. Believers' injuries cry. 3. Believers' prayers cry. 4. Christ's intercession cries over again their prayers and desires (Rev. vi. 9, compared with Rev. viii. 3). II. The second use is for comfort to believers, that as God's mercy is for them, so his justice to deliver them, not only from *men*, but from *sin;* and in and through Christ they may humbly plead justice as against sinners, so against sin; not only against the guilt but against the power, that seeing Christ died, sin should not live.—*Condensed from Nathanael Homes*, 1652.

Verse 1.—"*Ungodly . . . . deceitful . . . . unjust.*" There are *ungodly* men who, being destitute of religious principle, will not scruple to injure us, when they can thereby gratify their passions or advance their worldly interests. There are *deceitful* men who will put on the garb of friendship, and acquire our confidence and esteem, and then treacherously cheat us out of our property, or our reputation, or our peace. There are *unjust* men, who by fraud or by violence, would rob us of our dearest rights and most valuable possessions, and not only reduce our powers and opportunities of doing good, but even diminish our means of comfortable subsistence. And there are *oppressors*, who taking advantage of our weakness or dependence, and trampling alike on the maxims of equity and humanity, may exact from us unreasonable services, impose upon us heavy burdens and cruel restraints, and ply us with insults, and harassments, and deprivations, from which we can make no escape, and for which we can

find no redress.—*Andrew Thomson, D.D., in "Lectures on Portions of the Psalms."* 1826.

Verse 2.—"*Thou art the God of my strength.*" The godly man hath from God a threefold strength, namely, natural, providential, and spiritual. I. *Natural*, Acts xvii. 28. This is twofold: of body, of mind. Of robustness, hardness, and agility of body; of wit, invention, and valour of mind. Now, these donations of corporal and mental natural endowments are God's gifts. Psalm xviii. 34, 39. . . . . II. *Providential* strength, which is threefold: 1. God's donation of strengthening mercies. (1.) Corporal: wine to make glad, and bread to strengthen. Psalm civ. 15. (2.) Mental, common gifts; as Paul had a singular gift of language and single life; Apollos of elocution, argument, power of convincing. 2. Providential strength is God's making way for his people to act and put forth their strength. Psalm lxxviii. 50. 3. Providential strength is God's concurrence with our lawful human acting. Psalm xviii. 29.

III. The third sort of power is *spiritual:* God is the godly man's spiritual power. 1 John ii. 14: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong," namely, with spiritual strength, for it follows, "The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." This is the main strength of a godly man; as that text hints, namely, young men are naturally strong, but St. John takes no notice of that, but commends them for their spiritual strength. This spiritual strength is from the word of the Spirit, and from the Spirit of the word, that is, from the Spirit accompanying the word. 1. From *the word of the Spirit*, the word of God. Psalm cxix. 50: "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." To be "*quickened*," *i.e.*, enlivened, is to be full of vigour and spirit and to act mightily, and to "*comfort*" is, as the word signifies, to make strong; for when a man is most cheerful with sobriety, he is most strong. St. John in that place fore-quoted, saith the young men to whom he wrote were strong because the word of God abode in them. For (Prov. xii. 25) "whereas sorrow in the heart of man maketh it stoop"—makes it sickly, weak, drooping—"a good word maketh it glad," cheerful, strong, vigorous. And so if the word of a wise friend, how much more the word of God, with its many strengthening promises? Psalm xx. 2; cxix. 28. The word of God is the very mind and will of God, and power of God, and with the word God created the world, therefore, he that receives this word must needs receive a great deal of strength. Romans i. 16.

2. *The Spirit of the word*, the Holy Spirit that useth to accompany the word to them that receive it. By his Spirit God is in a believer (1 Cor. vi. 9; Eph. ii.); and this is the spirit of strength and power. Eph. iii. 16; 2 Tim. i. 7. As a powerful, active soul makes a vigorous body, so the Spirit in the soul makes the soul powerful and strong, being the soul of the soul of a believer. We read more than once or twice in the Scriptures, that when believers did any eminent act, it is said, *the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they did* so and so, *i.e.*, the Spirit of God in them did then put forth its power to make them act powerfully.—*Condensed from Nathanael Homes.*

Verse 3.—"*O send out thy light and thy truth.*" Possibly there may be an allusion to the Urim and Thummim, as the symbol of light and truth.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3.—"*Light and truth.*" Delightful and all-comprehensive words. They contain all the salvation and all the desire of a believing, confiding soul. But it is only when thus combined—separated they are no longer a ground of trust and joy. For what would favour avail without faithfulness? It would be no more than the uncertain friendship of men, who smile to-day and reproach to-morrow; who make large promises, but do not perform them. Even the "*light*" which angels and glorified spirits enjoy in heaven would be insufficient to banish all fear and to fill them with satisfaction, were it not for their confidence in the "*truth*" of God. How much more, then, must this be the case

with erring, sinful mortals on earth? When the humble spirit is bowed down under a sense of its utter unworthiness and innumerable weaknesses and defilements, its negligences, follies, and wanderings, what should save from despair but the confidence that he who has been merciful will also be faithful; that God is truth as well as light; that he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" that he "*cannot* lie," and that, therefore, "his mercy endureth for ever"? On the other hand, *truth* without *light*, faithfulness without grace, would be only the dreadful execution of terrible but just denunciations on the transgressors of the holy law. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam ate, and in that day became the subject of sin and death. This was *truth* executing judgment. But *light* arose around the darkness; beams of mercy tempered the heavy cloud. The promise of the Great Deliverer was given; then faithfulness was enlisted on the side of grace, and became engaged for its bestowment; "mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other." Since then, all humble and trusting souls have beheld them united, and have made their union the ground of their confidence and joy.—*Henry March.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy tabernacles.*" There were two tabernacles, one at Zion, where the ark stood, and another at Gibeon. 1 Chron. xvi. 37, 39. It is not to this fact that the psalmist alludes, however, but to the circumstance, in all probability of the different parts of the tabernacle. There was, first the holiest of all, then the sanctuary, and then the tabernacle of the convocation. Heb. ix. 1—8.—*John Morison.*

Verse 4.—"*Then will I go unto the altar of God.*" Let us remember that the approach to God in the holy place is by means of the altar, whence eternally ascendeth the fragrance and the preciousness of the one whole, perfect burnt-offering, and where for ever and ever the divine holiness resteth and feedeth with its pure fire with infinite satisfaction, with inconceivable delight. Oh, what a holy, a divine, a wondrous place is this "*altar of God!*" That altar now means all the value and everlasting efficacy of the one offering of Christ unto God for us; and it is in the full power and blessedness thereof that we draw nigh to God. To this point, to this unspeakably blessed position, the light and the truth of God will attract the child of God. Toward this altar all the rays of the light of divine favour and grace, and of divine truth and holiness, have from eternity converged; and from this point they shine forth toward and upon the soul and heart of the poor, far-off penitent, attracting him to that altar where he may meet his God. Let us then come to the altar of God; let us enter the cloud of holy incense that filleth the tabernacle of the Most High; let us realise how perfectly God is satisfied with that which Christ has done, with his obedience in dying to meet the claims of divine justice on the sinner, and to complete the perfect surrender of himself as our "*exceeding joy,*" even the gladness of our joy, the heart, essence, substance, and reality of our joy.—*John Offord*, 1868.

Verse 4.—"*Then will I go unto the altar of God.*" He would with cheerfulness run and offer up the sacrifices of thanksgiving to his gracious deliverer; he would take his own soul as the burnt-offering, and kindle and burn it up with the fire of a vigorous love and raised affections terminating upon God, the flames whereof should ascend to him alone. . . . . "*Unto God my exceeding joy,*" or, as the Hebrew is more exactly translated, *unto God the gladness of his joy*—that which gave a relish to every other comfort, which was the soul and life of his pleasures, and could only make them real and lasting; it was God who raised his joy to fulness of satisfaction and contentment.—*William Dunlop.*

Verse 4.—"*Then will I go . . . . unto God.*" The expression of *going to God* implies SUBMISSION and FRIENDSHIP. I. *Submission.* I will go and pay my homage to him, as my Sovereign; I will go and hear what he says; I will go and receive his orders. II. *Friendship.* I will go and consult him,

and converse with him as a friend ; and be thankful that, in such a troublesome and ensnaring world, I have such a friend to advise with. 1. I will go and tell him my *griefs ;* how greatly I am distressed with some particular disorder in my body, or with some disturbance in my family, or with some disappointment in my worldly circumstances, or (which is worse than all of them together) with a sad darkness in my soul. 2. I will go and tell him my *joys,* for even in this vale of tears "my heart is" sometimes "glad, and my glory rejoiceth." 3. I will go and tell him of my *sins.* He knows them, indeed, already, but he shall hear them from *me.* 4. I will go and tell him my *fears ;* how greatly I am distressed at times, when I perceive this or the other corruption so strong, which I thought had received its death wound . . . . . how I tremble when I have by my folly provoked the Lord to leave me, for fear he will never return again, etc. 5. I will go and tell him my *hopes,* for some hope I have amidst all my discouragements. . . . . I will go and tell him all this ; I will unbosom and unburthen my whole heart to him ; and if my *necessities* did not *drive* me to him, I should go to him from inclination.—*Condensed from Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 4.—"*Unto God.*" Believers are not satisfied in the use of religious duties, unless they arrive at God himself in those duties. We speak not here of that arrival at God himself which is by and after all duties, to a beatifical vision of God in glory, but we speak of that arrival at God himself which is to be had *in* duties, while we are in the exercise of duties ; namely, to attain to God's special presence in them, in an actual communion, communication and conversing with God, so that we are spiritually sensible he is with us therein. I say God's *special* presence and actual communion, to distinguish it from that ordinary habitual presence and communion of God's being with a believer at all times. John xiv. 16.—*Nathanael Homes.*

Verse 4.—"*My exceeding joy.*" The psalmist might well call God his *exceeding* joy, for it infinitely exceeds all other joy in its nature, degree, and duration. —*Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 4.—"*My exceeding joy.*" As faith acquires more strength, we come to think of God and address him in more endearing terms.—*J. P. Lange.*

Verse 4.—"*Exceeding joy.*" This can be said of no other joy. All other beauties have their boundaries, all other glories have their glooms. This is that illimitable sea, *God.*—*E. Paxton Hood.*

Verse 5.—"*Why art thou cast down, O my soul.*" He comes to his former remedy ; he had stilled his grief once before with the same meditation and upbraiding of his own soul, and chiding himself ; but he comes to it here as a *probatum est,* as a tried remedy ; he takes up his soul very short, "*Why art thou so cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?*" You see how David's passions here are interlaced with comforts, and his comforts with passions, till at last he gets the victory of his own heart. Beloved, neither sin nor grief for sin, are stilled and quieted at the first. You have some short-spirited Christians, if all be not quiet at the first, all is lost with them ; but it is not so with a true Christian soul, with the best soul living. It was not so with David when he was in distemper ; he checks himself, the distemper was not yet stilled ; he checks himself again, then the distemper breaks out again ; he checks himself again, and all little enough to bring his soul to a holy, blessed, quiet, temper, to that blessed tranquillity and rest that the soul should be in before it can enjoy its own happiness, and enjoy sweet communion with God. As you see in physic, perhaps one purge will not carry away the peccant humour, then a second must be added ; perhaps that will not do it, then there must be a third ; so when the soul hath been once checked, perhaps it will not do, we must fall to it again, go to God again. And then it may be there will be breaking out of the grief and malady again ; we must to it again, and never give over, that is the right temper of a Christian.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 5.—"*Hope in God.*" The more terrible the storm, the more necessary is the anchor. Heb. vi. 19.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 5.—"*Hope in God.*" The complete and perfect state of God's children here is not in *re*, but in *spe*: as Christ's kingdom is not of this world, so is not our hope. The worldling's motto is, "a bird in the hand." Give me to-day, say they, and take to-morrow whoso will. But the word of believers is, *spero meliora*—my hopes are better than my present possessions.—*Elnathan Parr.*

Verse 5.—The varied conflicts of the soul afford occasion for the exercise of the graces, and thus, through the divine wisdom and goodness, are made the means of eventual good.—*Henry March.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—We apply to God—I. As our *Judge*: "*Judge me.*" II. As our *Advocate*: "*Plead my cause.*" III. As our *Deliverer*: "*O deliver me.*"

Verse 1.—Popular opinion outweighed by divine approbation.

Verse 1.—How the Lord pleads the cause of his people.

Verse 1.—Deceit and injustice twin vipers; their origin, their character, their folly, their end.

Verses 1, 2, 4, 5.—*Five mys*: 1. My cause—"*plead it.*" 2. My strength—"*thou art.*" 3. My joy—God is. 4. My soul—"*why disquieted.*" 5. My God.

Verse 2.—"*The God of my strength.*" From whom it is derived, to whom it is dedicated, in whom it resides, by whom it shall be perfected.

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—1. From thee it comes. 2. By thee it is sustained. 3. To thee it is dedicated. 4. By thee it will be perfected. 5. By thee it will be rewarded.

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—I. *The nature of apparent forsaking.* Painful, protracted, perplexing. II. *The cause of it.* Secret sin to be laid bare, past sin chastised, graces tried, faith ultimately strengthened, etc. III. *The best conduct under it.* Appeal to God, confess, submit, pray, trust, etc.

Verse 2 (*last clauses*).—The two "whys." The questions themselves; the spirit in which they may be asked. The answers which may be given.

Verse 3.—"*O send out thy light and thy truth.*" I. What is truth? II. How truth is to be diffused. III. Why it should be diffused. IV. Who must be the main agent of it.—*Varied from Dr. Bogue.* 1800.

Verse 3.—The blessings desired; the guidance sought; the end longed for.

Verse 3.—Under what influence we should resort to divine worship.

Verse 4.—I. The good man's duty—expressed by *going to God.* II. His *blessedness*—expressed by *rejoicing in God.*—*Samuel Lavington.*

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—When? "*Then.*" Where? "*Altar of God.*" Who? "*I.*" Why? "*My exceeding joy.*"

Verse 4 (*second clause*).—It is God alone who can be an exceeding joy to his creatures.—*W. Dunlop's Sermons.*

Verse 4.—The joy of joy. The soul of soul joy.

Verse 4.—The great object of public worship, its bliss, and the praise resulting from attaining it.

Verse 4.—I. *The medium of joy*, the altar of God, or God in Christ Jesus. II. *The springs of joy*, or the attributes of God—mercy, justice, power, holiness, as seen in the atonement. III. *The value of joy*, as comfort, strength, etc.

Verse 4.—"*God my exceeding joy.*" A most rich and precious title.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—Possession, praise, resolution.

Verse 5.—Discouragement's recovery.—*R. Sibbes's Sermons.*

Verse 5.—"*I shall yet praise him.*" *I*, even *I; shall*, sooner or later, most assuredly; "*yet*," despite troubles, foes, devils; "*praise*" with gratitude, confidence, exultation; "*him*" above all other helpers, though now afflicting me.

Verse 5.—"*Health of my countenance*," removing that which mars it—sin, shame, fear, care, sorrow, weakness, etc.

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-THIRD PSALM.

"*Soul-Cordials against Sore Discomforts: in a Commentary or Explications and Applications of the whole Forty-third Psalm*," pp. 312—562 of "*The Works of Dr. Nathanael Homes*," 1652 [folio].

In "*Sabbaths at Home*," by Henry March, there is an exposition of this Psalm. See "*Treasury of David*," Vol. II., p. 323.

PSALM XLIV.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.—*The title is similar to the forty-second, and although this is no proof that it is by the same author it makes it highly probable. No other writer should be sought for to father any of the Psalms when David will suffice, and therefore we are loath to ascribe this sacred song to any but the great psalmist, yet as we hardly know any period of his life which it would fairly describe, we feel compelled to look elsewhere. Some Israelitish patriot fallen on evil times, sings in mingled faith and sorrow, his country's ancient glory and her present griefs, her traditions of former favour and her experience of pressing ills. By Christians it can best be understood if put into the mouth of the church when persecution is peculiarly severe. The last verses remind us of Milton's famous lines on the massacre of the Protestants among the mountains of Piedmont.*

The song before us is fitted for the voices of the saved by grace, the sons of Korah, *and is to them and to all others full of teaching, hence the title* Maschil.

DIVISION.—*From* 1—3, *the Lord's mighty works for Israel are rehearsed, and in remembrance of them faith in the Lord is expressed* 4—8. *Then the notes of complaint are heard* 9—16, *the fidelity of the people to their God is avowed,* 17—22, *and the Lord is entreated to interpose,* 23—26.

EXPOSITION.

WE have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, *what* work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

2 *How* thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; *how* thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

1. "*We have heard with our ears, O God.*" Thy mighty acts have been the subjects of common conversation; not alone in books have we read thy famous deeds, but in the ordinary talk of the people we have heard of them. Among the godly Israelites the biography of their nation was preserved by oral tradition, with great diligence and accuracy. This mode of preserving and transmitting history has its disadvantages, but it certainly produces a more vivid impression on the mind than any other; to hear with the ears affects us more sensitively than to read with the eyes; we ought to note this, and seize every possible opportunity of telling abroad the gospel of our Lord Jesus *viva voce*, since this is the most telling mode of communication. The expression, "heard with our ears," may denote the pleasure with which they listened, the intensity of their interest, the personality of their hearing, and the lively remembrance they had of the romantic and soul-stirring narrative. Too many have ears but hear not; happy are they who, having ears, have learned to hear.

"*Our fathers have told us.*" They could not have had better informants. Schoolmasters are well enough, but godly fathers are, both by the order of nature and grace, the best instructors of their sons, nor can they delegate the sacred duty. It is to be feared that many children of professors could plead very little before God of what their fathers have told them. When fathers are tongue-tied religiously with their offspring, need they wonder if their children's hearts remain sin-tied? Just as in all free nations men delight to gather around

the hearth, and tell the deeds of valour of their sires "in the brave days of old," so the people of God under the old dispensation made their families cheerful around the table, by rehearsing the wondrous doings of the Lord their God. Religious conversation need not be dull, and indeed it could not be if, as in this case, it dealt more with facts and less with opinions. "*What work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*" They began with what their own eyes had witnessed, and then passed on to what were the traditions of their youth. Note that the main point of the history transmitted from father to son was the work of God; this is the core of history, and therefore no man can write history aright who is a stranger to the Lord's work. It is delightful to see the footprints of the Lord on the sea of changing events, to behold him riding on the whirlwind of war, pestilence, and famine, and above all to see his unchanging care for his chosen people. Those who are taught to see God in history have learned a good lesson from their fathers, and no son of believing parents should be left in ignorance of so holy an art. A nation tutored as Israel was in a history so marvellous as their own, always had an available argument in pleading with God for aid in trouble, since he who never changes gives in every deed of grace a pledge of mercy yet to come. The traditions of our past experience are powerful pleas for present help.

2. "*How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand.*" The destruction of the Canaanites from the promised land is the work here brought to remembrance. A people numerous, warlike, gigantic and courageous, firmly established and strongly fortified, were driven out by a far feebler nation, because the Lord was against them in the fight. It is clear from Scripture that God sent a plague (so that the land ate up the inhabitants thereof), and also a visitation of hornets against the Canaanites, and by other means dispirited them, so that the easy victories of Joshua were but the results of God's having worked beforehand against the idolatrous nation. "*And plantedst them.*" The tribes of Israel were planted in the places formerly occupied by the heathen. Hivites and Jebusites were chased from their cities to make room for Ephraim and Judah. The Great Wonderworker tore up by the roots the oaks of Bashan, that he might plant instead thereof his own chosen "vineyard of red wine." "*How thou didst afflict the people.*" With judgments and plagues the condemned nations were harassed, by fire and sword they were hunted to the death, till they were all expelled, and the enemies of Israel were banished far away. "*And cast them out.*" This most probably refers to Israel and should be read, "caused them to increase." He who troubled his enemies smiled on his friends; he meted out vengeance to the ungodly nations, but he reserved of his mercy for the chosen tribes. How fair is mercy when she stands by the side of justice! Bright beams the star of grace amid the night of wrath! It is a solemn thought that the greatness of divine love has its counterpart in the greatness of his indignation. The weight of mercy bestowed on Israel is balanced by the tremendous vengeance which swept the thousands of Amorites and Hittites down to hell with the edge of the sword. Hell is as deep as heaven is high, and the flame of Tophet is as everlasting as the blaze of the celestial glory. God's might, as shown in deeds both of mercy and justice, should be called to mind in troublous times as a stay to our fainting faith.

3. "*For they got not the land in possession by their own sword.*" Behold how the Lord alone was exalted in bringing his people to the land which floweth with milk and honey! He, in his distinguishing grace, had put a difference between Canaan and Israel, and therefore, by his own effectual power, he wrought *for* his chosen and *against* their adversaries. The tribes fought for their allotments, but their success was wholly due to the Lord who wrought with them. The warriors of Israel were not inactive, but their valour was secondary to that mysterious, divine working by which Jericho's walls fell down, and the hearts of the heathen failed them for fear. The efforts of all the men-at-arms were employed, but as these would have been futile without divine succour, all the honour is ascribed unto the Lord. The passage

may be viewed as a beautiful parable of the work of salvation ; men are not saved without prayer, repentance, etc., but none of these save a man, salvation is altogether of the Lord. Canaan was not conquered without the armies of Israel, but equally true is it that it was not conquered by them ; the Lord was the conqueror, and the people were but instruments in his hands. "*Neither did their own arm save them.*" They could not ascribe their memorable victories to themselves ; he who made sun and moon stand still for them was worthy of all their praise. A negative is put both upon their weapons and themselves as if to show us how ready men are to ascribe success to second causes. "*But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance.*" The divine *hand* actively fought for them, the divine *arm* powerfully sustained them with more than human energy, and the divine *smile* inspired them with dauntless courage. Who could not win with such triple help, though earth, death, and hell should rise in war against him? What mattered the tallness of the sons of Anak, or the terror of their chariots of iron, they were as nothing when Jehovah arose for the avenging of Israel.

"*Because thou hadst a favour unto them.*" Here is the fountain from whence every stream of mercy flows. The Lord's delight in his people, his peculiar affection, his distinguishing regard—this is the mainspring which moves every wheel of a gracious providence. Israel was a chosen nation, hence their victories and the scattering of their foes ; believers are an elect people, hence their spiritual blessings and conquests. There was nothing in the people themselves to secure them success, the Lord's favour alone did it, and it is ever so in our case, our hope of final glory must not rest on anything in ourselves, but on the free and sovereign favour of the Lord of Hosts.

4 Thou art my King, O God : command deliverances for Jacob.
5 Through thee will we push down our enemies : through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.
6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.
7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.
8 In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

4. "*Thou art my King, O God.*" Knowing right well thy power and grace my heart is glad to own thee for her sovereign prince. Who among the mighty are so illustrious as thou art? To whom, then, should I yield my homage or turn for aid? God of my fathers in the olden time, thou art my soul's monarch and liege Lord. "*Command deliverances for Jacob.*" To whom should a people look but to their king? he it is who, by virtue of his office, fights their battles for them. In the case of our King, how easy it is for him to scatter all our foes! O Lord, the King of kings, with what ease canst thou rescue thy people ; a word of thine can do it, give but the command and thy persecuted people shall be free. Jacob's long life was crowded with trials and deliverances, and his descendants are here called by his name, as if to typify the similarity of their experience to that of their great forefather. He who would win the blessings of Israel must share the sorrows of Jacob. This verse contains a personal declaration and an intercessory prayer ; those can pray best who make most sure of their personal interest in God, and those who have the fullest assurance that the Lord is their God should be the foremost to plead for the rest of the tried family of the faithful.

5. "*Through thee will we push down our enemies.*" The fight was very close, bows were of no avail, and swords failed to be of service, it came to daggers drawing, and hand to hand wrestling, pushing and tugging. Jacob's God was

renewing in the seed of Jacob their father's wrestling. And how fared it with faith then? Could she stand foot to foot with her foe and hold her own? Yea, verily, she came forth victorious from the encounter, for she is great at a close push, and overthrows all her adversaries, the Lord being her helper.

"*Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*" The Lord's name served instead of weapons, and enabled those who used it to leap on their foes and crush them with jubilant valour. In union and communion with God, saints work wonders; if God be for us, who can be against us? Mark well that all the conquests of these believers are said to be "through thee," "through thy name:" never let us forget this, lest going a warfare at our own charges, we fail most ignominiously. Let us not, however, fall into the equally dangerous sin of distrust, for the Lord can make the weakest of us equal to any emergency. Though to-day we are timid and defenceless as sheep, he can by his power make us strong as the firstling of his bullock, and cause us to push as with the horns of unicorns, until those who rose up against us shall be so crushed and battered as never to rise again. Those who of themselves can scarcely keep their feet, but like little babes totter and fall, are by divine assistance made to overthrow their foes, and set their feet upon their necks. Read Christian's fight with Apollyon, and see how

> "The man so bravely played the man
> He made the fiend to fly."

6. "*For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.*" Thy people Israel, under thy guidance, shouldered out the heathen, and gained their land, not by skill of weapons or prowess of arms, but by thy power alone; therefore will we renounce for ever all reliance upon outward confidences, of which other men make such boast, and we will cast ourselves upon the omnipotence of our God. Bows having been newly introduced by king Saul, were regarded as very formidable weapons in the early history of Israel, but they are here laid aside together with the all-conquering sword, in order that there may be room for faith in the living God. This verse, in the first person singular, may serve as the confession of faith of every believer renouncing his own righteousness and strength, and looking alone to the Lord Jesus. O for grace to stand to this self-renunciation, for, alas! our proud nature is all too apt to fix its trust on the puffed-up and supposititious power of the creature. Arm of flesh, how dare I trust thee? How dare I bring upon myself the curse of those who rely upon man?

7. "*But thou hast saved us from our enemies.*" In ages past all our rescues have been due to thee, O God. Never hast thou failed us. Out of every danger thou hast brought us. "*And hast put them to shame that hated us.*" With the back of thy saving hand thou hast given them a cuff which has made them hide their faces; thou hast defeated them in such a manner as to make them ashamed of themselves to be overthrown by such puny adversaries as they thought the Israelites to be. The double action of God in blessing his people and confounding his enemies is evermore to be observed; Pharaoh is drowned, while Israel passes through the sea; Amalek is smitten, while the tribes rejoice; the heathen are chased from their abodes, while the sons of Jacob rest beneath their vine and fig-tree.

8. "*In God we boast all the day long.*" We have abundant reason for doing so while we recount his mighty acts. What blessed boasting is this! it is the only sort of boasting that is bearable. All other manna bred worms and stank except that which was laid up before the Lord, and all other boasting is loathsome save this glorying in the Lord, which is laudable and pleasing. "*And praise thy name for ever.*" Praise should be perpetual. If there were no new acts of love, yet ought the Lord to be praised for what he has done for his people. High let the song be lifted up as we bring to remembrance the eternal love which chose us, predestinated us to be sons, redeemed us with a price, and then enriched us with all the fulness of God.

"*Selah.*"—A pause comes in fitly here, when we are about to descend from

the highest to the lowest key. No longer are we to hear Miriam's timbrel, but rather Rachel's weeping.

9 But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame ; and goest not forth with our armies.

10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy : and they which hate us spoil for themselves.

11 Thou hast given us like sheep *appointed* for meat ; and hast scattered us among the heathen.

12 Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price.

13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

15 My confusion *is* continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,

16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth ; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

9. "*But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame.*" Here the patriot bard begins to contrast the past glories of the nation's history with its present sadness and distress ; which he does not ascribe to the death of some human champion, or to the accidents of war, but solely and alone to the withdrawal of Israel's God. It seemed to the mourner that Jehovah had grown weary of his people and put them away in abhorrence, as men lay aside leprous garments, loathing the sight of them. To show his displeasure he had made his people to be ridiculed by the heathen, whose easy victories over their largest armies covered Israel with disgrace. Alas ! for a church and people when the Lord in the active energy of his Spirit withdraws from them, they want no greater shame or sorrow. He will not cast away his people finally and totally, but many a church has been left to defeat and disgrace on account of sin, and therefore all churches should be exceedingly watchful lest the like should happen to themselves. Poverty and distress bring no shame on a people, but the Lord's absence takes from a church everything which can exalt and ennoble. "*And goest not forth with our armies.*" If the Lord be not the leader, of what avail are strong battalions ? Vain are the combined efforts of the most zealous workers if God's arm be not revealed. May none of us in our churches have to mourn over the ministry, the Sabbath school, the missionary work, the visiting, the street preaching, left to be carried out without the divine aid. If our great ally will not go with us our defeat is inevitable.

10. "*Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy.*" The humiliating consciousness that the Lord has left them soon makes men cowards. Flight closes the fight of those who have not the Lord in the van. "*And they which hate us spoil for themselves.*" After defeat and retreat, comes spoliation. The poor, vanquished nation paid a terrible penalty for being overcome ; plunder and murder desolated the conquered land, and the invaders loaded themselves with every precious thing which they could carry away. In spiritual experience we know what it is to be despoiled by our enemies ; doubts and fears rob us of our comforts, and terrible forebodings spoil us of our hopes ; and all because the Lord, for wise purposes, sees fit to leave us to ourselves. Alas ! for the deserted soul ; no calamity can equal the sorrow of being left of God, though it be but for a small moment.

11. "*Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat.*" As sheep are slaughtered for food, so were the people slain in flocks, with ease, and frequency,

Not with the dignity of sacrifice, but with the cruelty of the shambles, were they put to death. God appeared to give them up like sheep allotted to the butcher, to abandon them as the hireling abandons the flock to wolves. The plaint is bitterly eloquent. "*And hast scattered us among the heathen.*" Many were carried into captivity, far off from the public worship of the temple of God, to pine as exiles among idolaters. All this is ascribed to the Lord, as being allowed by him, and even appointed by his decree. It is well to trace the hand of God in our sorrows, for it is surely there.

12. "*Thou sellest thy people for nought.*" As men sell merchandise to any one who cares to have it, so the Lord seemed to hand over his people to any nation who might choose to make war upon them. Meanwhile no good result was perceptible from all the miseries of Israel; so far as the psalmist could discover, the Lord's name received no honour from the sorrows of his people; they were given away to their foes as if they were so little valued as not to be worth the ordinary price of slaves, and the Lord did not care to gain by them so long as they did but suffer. The woe expressed in this line is as vinegar mingled with gall: the expression is worthy of the weeping prophet. "*And dost not increase thy wealth by their price.*" If Jehovah had been glorified by all this wretchedness it could have been borne patiently, but it was the reverse; the Lord's name had, through the nation's calamities, been despised by the insulting heathen, who counted the overthrow of Israel to be the defeat of Jehovah himself. It always lightens a believer's trouble when he can see that God's great name will be honoured thereby, but it is a grievous aggravation of misery when we appear to be tortured in vain. For our comfort let us rest satisfied that in reality the Lord is glorified, and when no revenue of glory is manifestly rendered to him, he none the less accomplishes his own secret purposes, of which the grand result will be revealed in due time. We do not suffer for nought, nor are our griefs without result.

13. "*Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors.*" Scorn is always an intensely bitter ingredient in the cup of the oppressed. The taunts and jeers of the victors pain the vanquished almost as much as their swords and spears. It was a mystery indeed that God should suffer his royal nation, his peculiar people, to be taunted by all who dwelt near them. "*A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.*" The down-trodden people had become a common jest; "as base as Israel" cried the cruel tongue of the tyrant: so ordinary had the scorn become that the neighbouring nations, though perhaps equally oppressed, borrowed the language of the conquerors, and joined in the common mockery. To be a derision to both strong and weak, superiors, equals, and inferiors, is hard to bear. The tooth of scoffing bites to the bone. The psalmist sets forth the brutality of the enemy in many words, in order to move the pity of the Lord, to whose just anger he traced all the sorrows of his people; he used the very best of arguments, for the sufferings of his chosen touch the heart of God far more readily than any other reasonings. Blessed be his name, our great Advocate above knows how to avail himself of this powerful plea, and if we are at this hour enduring reproach for truth's sake, he will urge it before the eternal throne; and shall not God avenge his own elect? A father will not long endure to see his children despitefully entreated; he may put up with it for a little, but his love will speedily arouse his anger, and then it will fare ill with the persecutor and reviler.

14. "*Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.*" The lamentation is here repeated. They had sunk so low that none did them reverence, but universally and publicly they were treated as infamous and despicable. Those who reviled others dragged in Israel's name by the way as a garnish to their insults, and if perchance they saw one of the seed of Jacob in the street they used lewd gestures to annoy him. Those whose heads were emptiest wagged them at the separated people. They were the common butts of every fool's arrow. Such has been the lot of the righteous in ages past, such is their portion in a measure now, such may be yet again

their heritage in the worst sense. The world knows not its nobility, it has no eye for true excellence : it found a cross for the Master, and cannot be expected to award crowns to his disciples.

15. "*My confusion is continually before me.*" The poet makes himself the representative of his nation, and declares his own constant distress of soul. He is a man of ill-blood who is unconcerned for the sorrows of the church of which he is a member, or the nation of which he is a citizen ; the better the heart the greater its sympathy. "*And the shame of my face hath covered me.*" One constant blush, like a crimson mantle, covered him both before God and man ; he felt before God that the divine desertion was well deserved, and before man, that he and his people were despicable indeed now that heavenly help was gone. It is well for a nation when there still exist in it men who lay to heart its sin and shame. God will have pity on his chastened ones, and it is a pledge thereof when he sends us choice ministers, men of tenderness, who make the people's case their own.

16. "*For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth.*" It seems that from mocking the people of God, the adversaries advanced to reviling God himself, they proceeded from persecution to the sin which is next of kin, namely blasphemy. "*By reason of the enemy and avenger.*" The enemy boasted of avenging the defeats of their forefathers ; they took revenge for the ancient victories of Israel, by insulting over the now fallen people. Here was a sad plight for a nation to be placed in, but it was by no means a hopeless case, for the Lord who brought all this evil upon them could with equal ease release them from it. So long as Israel looked alone to her God, and not to her own arm, no foe could retain her beneath his foot ; she *must* arise, for God was on her side.

17 All this is come upon us ; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.

18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way ;

19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god ;

21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long ; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

17. "*All this is come upon us ; yet have we not forgotten thee.*" Here the psalmist urges that Israel had not turned away from her allegiance to Jehovah. When in the midst of many griefs we can still cling to God in loving obedience, it must be well with us. True fidelity can endure rough usage. Those who follow God for what they get, will leave him when persecution is stirred up, but not so the sincere believer ; he will not forget his God, even though the worst come to the worst. "*Neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.*" No idol was set up, the ordained worship was not relinquished, God was still nationally acknowledged, and therefore the psalmist is more earnest that the Lord should interpose. This and the succeeding verses are suitable for the lips of martyrs, indeed the entire psalm might be called the martyr's complaint. Not for sin but for righteousness did the saints suffer, not for falsehood but for truth, not for forsaking the Lord but for following hard after him. Sufferings of such a sort may be very terrible, but they are exceedingly honourable, and the comforts of the Lord shall sustain those who are accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

18. "*Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.*" Heart and life were agreed, and both were true to the Lord's way. Neither within nor without had the godly sufferers offended ; they were

not absolutely perfect, but they were sincerely free from all wilful transgression. It was a healthy sign for the nation that her prophet-poet could testify to her uprightness before God, both in heart and act; far oftener the case would have worn quite another colour, for the tribes were all too apt to set up other gods and forsake the rock of their salvation.

19. "*Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons.*" Though utterly crushed and rendered desolate and driven as it were to associate with creatures such as jackals, owls, serpents, which haunt deserted ruins, yet Israel remained faithful. To be true to a smiting God, even when the blows lay our joys in ruinous heaps, is to be such as the Lord delighteth in. Better to be broken by God than from God. Better to be in the place of dragons than of deceivers. "*And covered us with the shadow of death.*" The language is very strong. The nation is described as completely enveloped in the dense darkness of despair and death, covered up as though coffined in hopelessness. Yet the claim is made that they still remained mindful of their God, and a glorious plea it is. Better death than false of faith. Those who are true to God shall never find him false to them.

20. An appeal is now made to the omniscience of God; he is himself called in to bear witness that Israel had not set up another God. "*If we have forgotten the name of our God.*" This would be the first step in apostacy; men first forget the true, and then adore the false. "*Or stretched out our hands to a strange god.*" Stretching out the hands was the symbol of adoration or of entreaty in prayer; this they had not offered to any of the idols of the heathen.

21. "*Shall not God search this out?*" Could such idolatry be concealed from him? Would he not with holy indignation have detected unfaithfulness to itself, even had it been hidden in the heart and unrevealed in the life? "*For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*" He is acquainted with the inner workings of the mind, and therefore this could not have escaped him. Not the heart only which is secret, but the secrets of the heart, which are secrets of the most secret thing, are as open to God as a book to a reader. The reasoning is that the Lord himself knew the people to be sincerely his followers, and therefore was not visiting them for sin; hence, then, affliction evidently came from quite another cause.

22. "*Yea,*" *i.e.*, assuredly, certainly, "*for thy sake,*" not for our offences, but for obeying thee; the trials of these suppliants came upon them because they were loyal to their God. "*Are we killed all the day long.*" Persecution never ceased to hound them to the death, they had no respite and found no door of escape; and all in God's behalf, because they would not forsake their covenant God and King. "*We are counted as sheep for the slaughter;*" as if we were only meant to be killed, and made on purpose to be victims; as if it were as easy and as innocent a thing to slay us as to slaughter sheep. In this and following verses we clearly hear the martyr's cry. From Piedmont and Smithfield, from St. Bartholomew's massacre and the dragoonades of Claverhouse, this appeal goes up to heaven, while the souls under the altar continue their solemn cry for vengeance. Not long shall the church plead in this fashion, her shame shall be recompensed, her triumph shall dawn.

23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast *us* not off for ever.

24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, *and* forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.

26 Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

23. "*Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?*" God sleepeth not, but the psalmist puts it so, as if on no other theory he could explain the divine inaction. He would fain see the great Judge ending oppression and giving peace to the holy,

therefore does he cry "Awake;" he cannot understand why the reign of tyranny and the oppression of virtue are permitted, and therefore he enquires, "Why sleepest thou?" *Arise.* This is all thou needest to do, one move of thine will save us. "*Cast us not off for ever.*" Long enough hast thou deserted us; the terrible effects of thine absence are destroying us; end thou our calamities, and let thine anger be appeased. In persecuting times men are apt to cry, Where is the God of Israel? At the thought of what the saints have endured from their haughty enemies, we join our voices in the great martyr cry and sing with the bard of Paradise:—

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even those who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep."

24. "*Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?*" Not petulantly, but piteously and enquiringly, we may question the Lord when his dealings are mysterious. We are permitted to order our case with arguments, and plead the right before the face of the august Majesty. Why, Lord, dost thou become oblivious of thy children's woes? This question is far more easily asked than answered; it is hard, indeed, in the midst of persecution to see the reason why we are left to suffer so severely.

25. "*For our soul is bowed down to the dust.*" Our heart is low as low can be, as low as the dust beneath the soles of men's feet. When the heart sinks, the man is down indeed. Heart-sorrow is the very heart of sorrow. "*Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*" The man is prone upon the earth, and he is not only down, but fastened down on the earth and glued to it. It is misery, indeed, when the heart cannot escape from itself, is shut up in its own dejection, and bound with the cords of despondency. God's saints may be thus abject, they may be not only in the dust, but on the dunghill with Job and Lazarus, but their day cometh, and their tide will turn, and they shall have a brave summer after their bitter winter.

26. "*Arise for our help.*" A short, but sweet and comprehensive prayer, much to the point, clear, simple, urgent, as all prayers should be. "*And redeem us for thy mercies' sake.*" Here is the final plea. The favour is redemption, the plea is mercy; and this, too, in the case of faithful sufferers who had not forgotten their God. Mercy is always a safe plea, and never will any man find a better.

"Were I a martyr at the stake,
I'd plead my Saviour's name,
Intreat a pardon for his sake,
And urge no other claim."

Here ends this memorable Psalm, but in heaven its power ends not, but brings down deliverance for the tried people of God.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—On a survey of this Psalm, it would seem not to admit of a doubt that the speakers are of the race of Israel; and yet expositors for the most part have found much difficulty in so understanding it, in this—the natural sense—so as even to be compelled to abandon it, owing to the impossibility of fixing on any period in the history of that people which would furnish an occasion for it, and verify its language. Thus, it cannot be referred to the times of the

Babylonish captivity ; for to this it is objected, and with reason, first, that verses 11 and 14 represent the speakers as "scattered among the nations," and "a by-word among the peoples," whereas their exile was then confined to one country ; and, secondly, that in verses 17—21 there is an assertion of faithful adherence to the worship of the true God, which he is called to witness as acquitting the sufferers of having brought the evil on themselves, while that captivity was a punishment of the nation for their apostacy, and especially for the grievous sin of idolatry. And the same objections lie to interpreting it with reference to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees ; beside that, the history of the canon of Scripture is decisive against assigning so late a date to any of the Psalms. Still less can the times of David be looked to for the occasion, since, though religion was then pure, there was, on the other hand, no dispersion of the nation nor any calamity such as to warrant the lamentation, "Thou hast cast us off, and put us to shame. . . . . Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat," etc. Whence it appeared that there was no alternative but to consider the Psalm as exclusively the language of the Christian church, and, in her primitive days, as the period at once of her greatest purity and suffering.—*William de Burgh.*

Whole Psalm.—S. Ambrose observes, that in former Psalms we have seen a prophecy of Christ's passion, resurrection, and ascension, and of the coming of the Holy Ghost, and that here we are taught that we ourselves must be ready to struggle and suffer, in order that these things may profit us. Human will must work together with divine grace.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1.—"*We have heard with our ears,*" *i.e.*, we have both heard and heeded it, with utmost attention and affection. It is not a *pleonasmus*, but an *emphasis* that is here used.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*Our fathers have told us.*" Hear this, saith Basil, ye fathers that neglect to teach your children such things as may work his fear and love in them, and faith to rely upon and seek to him in all times of danger. They made their mouths, as it were, books, wherein the mighty deeds of the Lord might be read to his praise, and to the drawing of their children's hearts unto him.—*John Mayer.*

Verse 1.—"*What work thou didst.*" Why only "*work*" in the singular, when such innumerable deliverances had been wrought by him, from the passage of the Red Sea to the destruction of the hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians? Because all these were but types of that one great work, that one stretching forth of the Lord's hand, when Satan was vanquished, death destroyed, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers.—*Ambrose.*

Verse 1.—"*What work thou didst.*" While the songs of other nations sing of the heroism of their ancestors, the songs of Israel celebrate the works of *God.*—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 1.—Three necessary requirements for learning well : 1. Intention and attention in him who learns, "*we have heard with our ears.*" 2. Authority in him that teaches, "our *fathers* have told us." 3. Love between the teacher and the taught, "*our* fathers."—*Hugo* (*Cardinal*), *quoted in Neale's Commentary.*

Verses 1, 2, 4, 8.—Children are their parents' heirs ; it were unnatural for a father before he dies to bury up his treasure in the earth, where his children should not find or enjoy it ; now the mercies of God are not the least part of his treasure, nor the least of his children's inheritance, being both helps to their faith, matter for their praise, and spurs to their obedience. "*Our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, how thou didst drive out the heathen,*" etc. (ver. 1, 2) ; from this they ground their confidence ; verse 4 : "*Thou art my King, O God : command deliverances for Jacob ;*" and excite their thankfulness, verse 8 : "*In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever.*" Indeed, as children are their parents' heirs, so they become in justice liable to pay their parents' debts ; now the great debt which the saint at death stands charged with, is that which he owes to God for his mercies, and, therefore it is

but reason he should tie his posterity to the payment thereof. Thus mayest thou be praising God in heaven and earth at the same time.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—

"Thou with thine hand, hast driven out heathen,
And hast planted them;
The nations thou hast broken down,
But them thou hast engraffed."

The two clauses of this verse stand in regular contrast. The first has the figure of rooting out one kind of tree, and planting another, as the Canaanites were rooted out of Palestine, and Israel was planted in their stead. (Compare Psalm lxxx. 8). The second figure is that of cutting off bad branches, and engrafting others in their place, in the same root, which is Palestine again.—*Benjamin Weiss.*

Verse 3.—"*They got not the land in possession by their own sword.*" The Lord's part in a work is best seen when man's part, and all that he as an instrument hath done, or could have done in it, is declared null; being considered as separate from God who moved the instruments, and did work by them what he pleased.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 3.—"*Because thou hadst a favour unto them.*" Free grace was the fundamental cause of all their felicity. God loved them because he loved them. Deut. vii. 7. He chose them of his love, and then loved them for his choice.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—God's love to Israel was free, unmerited, and amazing, and he gave them a land for which they did not labour, and cities which they built not, and vineyards and oliveyards which they planted not. Josh. xxiv. 13. In some cases neither sword nor bow were used, but hornets were the instruments of conquest. Josh. xxiv. 12. Since the fall of Adam all good things in the lot of any mere man are undeserved kindnesses.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—The prophet does not suppose any worthiness in the person of Abraham, nor imagine any desert in his posterity, on account of which God dealt so bountifully with them; but ascribes the whole through the good pleasure of God. . . . . Nor does the psalmist here treat of the general benevolence of God, which extends to the whole human race: but he discourses of the difference which exists between the elect and the rest of the world, and the cause of this difference is here referred to the mere good pleasure of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*My King;*" apparently with a personal application to himself, the poet individually claiming his own place in the covenant between God and his people.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 4.—"*Thou art my king, O God; command deliverances for Jacob.*" If there were no creature, no instrument in the world to help, yet would you not be at a loss in time of need, for he that is on the throne could do it alone. He can do all that ever you need, without any means or instruments. His bare word is sufficient, all-sufficient, for it, whatever it be, how great, how difficult, how impossible soever it seems. Such a power there is even in the word of the great King. There needs no more to deliver you, to deliver his people anywhere, how deep soever plunged, but only the *command* of him that sits on the throne. If the gospel, the interests of Christ, in these parts of the world, and the dear concerns of our souls, and the souls of posterity, were all as dry bones, in a more forlorn and hopeless condition than they are, he could make all live with a word. He that is our King, that sits upon the throne, can command life into that which seems as far from living as a dry bone. While he keeps the throne, it is a senseless heart that fails through distrust of his power, even when all visible power and help fail.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 5.—"*Through thee will we push down our enemies:*" literally, "We will toss them in the air with our horn;" a metaphor taken from an ox or bull tossing the dogs into the air which attack him.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.*" By "*bow*" and "*sword,*" he meaneth all manner of weapons and warlike instruments whatsoever; and by "*saving,*" he meaneth delivering from dangers, speaking under the person of one (because all the faithful are but one body), in the name of all the rest.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 6.—"*I will not trust in my bow,*" etc. I will not trust in *my own* sword or bow, but in the *sword* of the Divine Warrior, and in the *bow* of the Divine Archer, whose arrows are sharp in the heart of his enemies, as described in the next (Psalm xlv. 3—5), which is connected by that imagery with this Psalm, as well as by its inner meaning.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6.—The less confidence we have in ourselves or in anything beside God, the more evidence have we of the sincerity of our faith in God.—*David Dickson.*

Verses 6, 7.—The two verses correspond exactly to verse 3. As there, in reference to the past, the salvation was ascribed wholly to God, so here in reference to the future.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 11.—"*Like sheep appointed for meat.*" This very strongly and strikingly intimates the extent of the persecution and slaughter to which they were exposed; there being no creature in the world of which such vast numbers are constantly slaughtered as of sheep for the subsistence of man. The constancy of such slaughter is also mentioned in verse 22 as illustrating the continual oppression to which the Hebrews were subject.—*Kitto's Pictorial Bible.*

Verse 11.—"*Like sheep appointed for meat,*" and not reserved for breeding or for wool.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 12.—"*Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.*" The sense is: Thou hast given thy people unto the power of their enemies without trouble, without causing the victory even to be clearly bought, as one who parts with a good for any price, which he despises and hates, desiring merely to get rid of it.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 12.—"*Thou sellest thy people for nought,*" etc. Referring to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, Eusebius says: "Many were sold for a small price; there were many to be sold, but few to buy."

Verse 12.—"*And dost not increase thy wealth by their price.*" Thou hast not advanced thy honour and service thereby; for thy enemies do not serve thee more and better than thy people, nor yet so much.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—*Takest no money for them;* literally, *enhancest not the price of them,* as a seller usually does to the buyer.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 14.—"*Thou makest us a byword;*" literally, *for a similitude,* מָשָׁל stands here, as in the original passage (Deut. xxviii. 37), in the common signification, *similitude.* The misery of Israel is so great, that people would figuratively call a miserable man a Jew, just as liars were called Cretans; wretched slaves, Sardians. So far as the people from being now "blessed of the Lord" in whom according to the promise, all the heathen are to be blessed.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 15.—"*My confusion is continually before me.*" When the visible church is visited with sad calamities, the true members thereof are partakers of the trouble, and sorrow, and shame of that condition.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 17.—Eusebius, narrating the cruelties inflicted upon the *Christians*

by the Eastern tyrant, Maximinus, says: "He prevailed against all sorts of people, the Christians only excepted, who contemned death and despised his tyranny. The men endured burning, beheading, crucifying, ravenous devouring of beasts, drowning in the sea, maiming and broiling of the members, goring and digging out of the eyes, mangling of the whole body; moreover, famine and imprisonment: to be short, they suffered every kind of torment for the service of God rather than they would leave the worship of God, and embrace the adoration of idols. Women also, not inferior to men through the power of the word of God, put on a manly courage, whereof some suffered the torments with men, some attained unto the like masteries of virtue."—*From "The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus."*

Verse 17.—"*Yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.*" Although we cannot excuse ourselves from many other sins for which thou hast justly punished us, yet this we must say for ourselves, that through thy grace we have kept ourselves from apostacy and idolatry, notwithstanding all the examples and provocations, rewards proposed and promised, or punishments threatened to induce us thereunto; which we hope thou wilt graciously consider, and not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 17.—If any of you would abide by Jesus Christ in this storm, try how ye have covenanted with him, and how ye have closed the bargain with him, and upon what terms. But I trow there are many of you in this age that are like young wanton folk, that run fast together and marry, but never take any account of how they will keep house, but presently go to poverty and beggary. I trow it falls out so with many of you that are professors in this generation. Ye take up your religion, and ye wot not how, and ye cannot give an account how ye came by it. I will tell you, sirs; ye will abide no longer by Christ than till a storm blow, and then ye will quit him and deny his cause. Ye have need to take heed to this, for it will ruin your souls in the end of the day. But I shall tell you, sirs, the right way of covenanting with God. It is when Christ and the believer meet. Our Lord gives him his laws, statutes, and commands, and he charges him not to quit a hoof of them. No; though he should be torn into a thousand pieces; and the right covenanter says, Amen.—*Alexander Peden's Sermon*, 1682.

Verses 17–19.—Neither the persecuting hand of men, nor the chastising hand of God, relaxed ancient singular saints. Believers resemble the *moon*, which emerges from her eclipse by keeping her motion, and ceases not to shine because the dogs bark at her. Shall we cease to be professors because others will not cease to be persecutors?—*William Secker.*

Verses 17–19.—The church having reported her great troubles, speaks it as an argument of much sincerity towards God, and strength of grace received from him: "*All this has come upon us*" (that is, all these common calamities and afflictions), "*yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;*" as if she had said, These afflictions have been strong temptations upon us to cause us to decline from thy ways, but through grace we have kept our ground and remained constant in thy covenant, yea, "*though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*" As many, yea, most of the saints have improved under the cross, so there have been some, who either through their present unbelief, or forgetfulness of "the exhortation which" (as the apostle saith, Heb. xii. 5), "speaketh unto them as unto children," have had their faintings or declinings under it.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 18.—"*Our heart is not turned back.*" Serious piety has become a ludicrous subject with which the wanton wits of this atheistical world sport themselves; but behold the wisdom and goodness of God, exhibiting to the world undeniable testimonies of the truth of religion as often as the sincere

professors thereof are brought to the test by afflictions from the hand of God, or persecutions from the hands of men. Lo! "here is the faith and patience of the saints;" here is their courage, meekness, and self-denial, shining as gold in the fire. They have the real proofs of it before their eyes. Instead of casting them into hell, and convincing them by eternal fire, he is pleased to cast his own people into the fire of affliction, that they who scoff at them may be convinced at an easier and cheaper rate. It is no new thing to see the enemies of religion brought over to embrace it by the constancy and faithfulness of the saints in their trials and sufferings for it. God grant that the atheism of this present generation do not occasion a more fiery trial to the people of God in it than they have yet suffered.—*John Flavel.*

Verse 18.—"*Our heart.*" The word לֵבָב, or Greek καρδία, that is rendered "*heart*," both in the Old and New Testament, doth signify the understanding, the mind, will, affections, conscience, the whole soul. "*Our heart is not turned back.*" Our understandings and minds are the same as they were in a summer's day, though now we be in a winter's storm; though now we be afflicted, tossed, broken, and persecuted, yet notwithstanding, "*our heart is not turned back*," our mind, will, affections, and conscience, our whole soul, is the same now as before.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 19.—"*Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons*," etc. Where men, comparable to dragons for their poison and cruelty, dwell, particularly in Rome, and the Roman jurisdiction, both Pagan and Papal, the seat of Satan the great red dragon, and of his wretched brood and offspring, the beast, to whom he has given his power; where the saints and followers of Christ have been sorely afflicted and persecuted, and yet have held fast the name of Christ, and not denied his faith. See Rev. ii. 13, and xii. 3. The wilderness is the habitation of dragons; and this is the name of the place where the church is said to be in the times of the Papacy, and where she is fed and preserved for a time, and times, and half-time. Rev. xii. 6, 14. "*And covered us with the shadow of death.*" As the former phrase denotes the cruelty of the enemies of Christ's church and people, this their dismal afflictions and forlorn state and condition; and may have some respect to the darkness of Popery, when it was at the height, and the church of Christ was covered with it, there being very little appearances and breakings forth of gospel light anywhere.—*John Gill.*

Verse 19.—"*Dragons.*" The word rendered *dragons*—תַּנִּים, *tannim*—means either a great fish, a sea monster, a serpent, a dragon, or a crocodile. It may also mean a jackal, a fox, or a wolf. De Wette renders it here *jackals.* The *idea* in the passage is essentially the same, whichever interpretation of the word is adopted. The "*place* of dragons" would denote the place where such monsters are found, or where they had their abode; that is to say, in desolate places, wastes, deserts, old ruins, depopulated towns.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 20.—"*Stretched out our hands to a strange god.*" *The stretching out the hand* towards an object of devotion, or an holy place, was an ancient usage among the Jews and heathens both, and it *continues* in the East to this time, which continuance I do not remember to have seen remarked. That this attitude in prayer has *continued* among the Eastern people, appears by the following passage from Pitts, in his account of the religion and manners of the Mohammedans. Speaking of the Algerines throwing wax candles and pots of oil overboard, as a present to some marabbot (or Mohammedan saint), Pitt goes on, and says, "When this is done, they all together *hold up their hands*, begging the marabbot's blessing, and a prosperous voyage." In the same page he tells us, "the marabbots have generally a little neat room built over their graves, resembling in figure their mosques or churches, which is very nicely cleaned, and well looked after." And in the succeeding page he tells us, "Many people there are who will scarce pass by any of them without *lifting up* their hand, and saying some short prayer." In like manner, he tells us, that at quitting the *Beat*, or holy

house at Mecca, to which they make devout pilgrimages, "*they hold up their hands towards the Beat*, making earnest petitions."—*Harmer's "Observations."*

Verse 21.—"*Shall not God search this out?*" etc. Are there such variety of trials appointed to examine the sincerity of men's graces? How great a vanity, then, is hypocrisy! and to how little purpose do men endeavour to conceal and hide it! We say, murder will out; and we may as confidently affirm, hypocrisy will out. When Rebekah had laid the plot to disguise her son Jacob, and by personating his brother to get the blessing, Jacob thus objects against it: "My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing." As if he should say, But what if my father detect the cheat? How, then, shall I look him in the face? How shall I escape a curse? After the same manner every upright soul scares itself from the way of hypocrisy. If I dissemble, and pretend to be what I am not, my Father will find me out. There is no darkness nor shadow of death that can conceal the hypocrite; but out it will come at last, let him use all the art he can to hide it. . . . . If men's works be not good, it is impossible they should be hid long. A gilded piece of brass may pass from hand to hand a little while, but the touchstone will discover the base metal; and if that does not, the fire will.—*John Flavel.*

Verse 21.—A godly man dares not sin secretly. He knows that God sees in secret. As God cannot be deceived by our subtlety, so he cannot be excluded by our secrecy.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 21.—In time of persecution for religion, nothing can counterbalance the terrors and allurements of the persecutors, and make a man steadfast in the cause of God, save the fear of God, and love to God settled in the heart; for the reason of the saint's steadfastness in this Psalm, is because God would have searched out their sin if they had done otherwise, "*for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 22.—"*Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long,*" etc. Leonard Schoener left, amongst other papers, the following admonition, to comfort all who were suffering for Christ's name:—

"We pray thee, O eternal God, to bow down thy gracious ear. Lord of Sabaoth, thou Lord of hosts, hear our complaint, for great affliction and persecution have prevailed. Pride has entered thine inheritance, and many supposed to be Christians, have united themselves therewith, and have thus brought in the abomination of desolation. They waste and destroy the Christian sanctuary. They have trodden the same under foot, and the abomination of desolation is worshipped as God. They have troubled thy holy city, thrown down thy holy altar, and slain her servants when they could lay their hands upon them. And now that we as a little flock are left, they have driven us into all thy lands with contempt and reproach. We are scattered as sheep having no shepherd. We have been compelled to forsake house and home. We are as night ravens which abide in the rocks; our chambers are in holes and crags. They watch for us as fowls that fly in the air. We wander in the woods, they hunt us with dogs. They lead us away, seized and bound, as lambs that open not their mouths. They cry out against us as seditious persons and heretics. We are brought like sheep to the slaughter. Many sit oppressed, and in bonds which even decay their bodies. Some have sunk under their sufferings, and died without fault. Here is the patience of the saints in the earth. We must be tried by suffering here. The faithful have they hanged on trees, strangled, hewn in pieces, secretly and openly drowned. Not only men, but likewise women and maidens have borne witness to the truth, that Jesus Christ is the truth, the only way to eternal life. The world still rages, and rests not; it raves as if mad. They invent lies against us. They cease not their fires and murders. They make the world too narrow for us. O Lord, how long wilt thou be silent? How long wilt thou not judge the blood of thy saints? Let

it come up before thy throne. How precious in thine eye is the blood of thy holy ones! Therefore have we comfort in all our need, a refuge in thee alone, and in none besides; but neither comfort, nor rest, nor peace on this earth. But he who hopeth in thee shall never be confounded. O Lord, there is no sorrow so great that can separate us from thee; therefore, without ceasing we call upon thee, through Christ thy Son our Lord, whom thou of thy free grace hast given us for our comfort. He hath prepared and made known to us the straight path, and the way to eternal life. Everlasting glory and triumph, honour and praise, be given unto thee, both now and to eternity, and let thy righteousness remain for ever. Let all the people bless thy holy name, through Christ the righteous Judge, who cometh to judge the whole world. Amen."—*From "A Martyrology of the Churches of Christ, commonly called Baptists. Edited by E. B. Underhill."* 1850.

Verse 22.—"*For thy sake are we killed.*" It is mercy to us, that when God might punish us for our sins, he doth make our correction honourable, and our troubles to be for a good cause—"*For thy sake,*" etc.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 22.—"*For thy sake.*" This passage is cited by St. Paul, Rom. viii. 36, apparently from the LXX, in illustration of the fact that the church of God has in all ages been a persecuted church. But there is this remarkable difference between the tone of the psalmist and the tone of the apostle: the former cannot understand the chastening, and complains that God's heavy hand has been laid without cause upon his people; the latter can rejoice in persecutions also, and exclaim, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 22.—"*Killed.*" The word here used is not from קָטַל, but from הָרַג, which means *to strangle:* this is the rendering given in "Lange's Bibelwerk."

Verse 23.—"*Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?*" and Psalm cxxi. 4, "*Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*" If God at no time sleep, why doth the church call on him so often to awake? If he must be awakened from sleep, why doth the psalmist say he never sleeps? Are not these places contradictory?

Answer: It is one thing what the afflicted church cries in the heat of her sufferings, another thing what the Spirit of truth speaks for the comfort of the saints. It is ordinary for the best of saints and martyrs, during the storm, to go to God as Peter did to Christ at sea (sleeping in the stern of the ship), with such importunity in prayer as if the Lord were no more sensible of their agony than Jonah was of the mariners' misery, ready to perish in the turbulent ocean, and he cried out, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise! Saints are so familiar with God in prayer, as if they were at his bedside.

The Soul's Application.—O thou never-slumbering Watchman of the house of Israel, carest not thou that we perish? Awake, awake! put on strength, gird thyself, O thou arm of God! I know thou art up, but what am I the better except thou help me up? I know thou sleepest not as man doth, but what advantage hath my soul by that, except thou show thyself, that I may know thou art waking? Oh, it is I that am asleep! Thou seemest to sleep only to awaken me. O that I could watch with thee one hour, as thou bidd'st me; I should soon perceive then thy vigilancy over me for ever.—*William Streat in "The Dividing of the Hoof."* 1654.

Verse 23.—"*Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?*" etc. The weakness of our faith is open to the temptation of supposing that God regards not the situation of his people in the world; and the Spirit, who knows our infirmities, provides a petition suited to this trial, which expresses at the same time an expectation that God will arise to claim his people as his own.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 25.—"*For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*" We are as to body and soul, smitten and thrown down, glued as it were to the ground, so that we cannot raise ourselves up.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 25.—"*For our soul is bowed down to the dust,*" etc. The speech is metaphorical, expressing the depth of their misery, or the greatness of their sorrow and humiliation. 1. The depth of their misery, with the allusion to the case of a man overcome in battle, or mortally wounded, and tumbling in the dust, or to a man dead and laid in the earth; as, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Psa. xxii. 15. Sure we are, the expression importeth the extremity of distress and danger, either as a man dead or near death. 2. The greatness of their sorrow and humiliation; and so the allusion is taken from a man prostrate and grovelling on the ground, which was their posture of humbling themselves before the Lord, or when any great calamity befell them. As when Herod Agrippa died, they put on sackcloth and lay upon the earth weeping.—*Thomas Manton.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The encouraging traditions of church history. The days of yore.

Verse 1.—The parents' duty, and the children's privilege.

Verse 1.—Family conversation, the most profitable subject for it.

Verse 1.—The true glory of the good old times.

Verse 2.—The contrast; or, the dealings of God with saints and sinners.

Verse 3.—Free grace exalted. I. In putting a negative upon human power. II. In manifestations of divine energy. III. In its secret source, "*Because thou hadst a favour unto them.*"

Verse 3.—I. The creature laid low. II. The Lord exalted. III. Discriminating grace revealed.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—The eternal well-spring of all mercy.

Verse 4.—I. Divine royalty acknowledged. II. Royal interposition entreated. III. Divine covenant hinted at, "*Jacob;*" or, the loyal subject seeking royal aid for the royal seed.

Verse 4.—Personal allegiance, and pleading intercession.

Verse 4.—"*My King.*" This intends—I. My Ruler. II. My Honour. III. My Leader. IV. My Defender.

Verse 4.—The deliverances of Jacob, illustrated by his eventful life.

Verse 5.—Our enemies, in what ways we push them down, by what strength, and in what spirit.

Verse 5.—Our enemies, their activity, the closeness of their approach, the certainty of their overthrow, the secret of our strength.

Verse 6.—Relinquishment of outward trusts. "*My bow*" may miss its aim, may be broken, may be snatched away. "*My sword*" may snap, or grow blunt, or slip from my hold. We may not trust in our abilities, our experience, our shrewdness, our wealth, etc.

Verse 6.—Self-renunciation—the duty of saint and sinner.

Verse 7.—Accomplished salvation. How never achieved, "*But.*" By whom wrought, "*thou.*" When performed, "*hast.*" For whom, "*us.*" To what extent, "*from our enemies.*"

Verse 7.—Salvation completed, hell confounded, Christ exalted.

Verse 8.—Praise, its continuance—how to make it continual, how to manifest it perpetually, influence of its continuance, and reasons to compel us to abide in it.

Verse 9.—A lament for the declension of the church.

Verse 9.—In what sense God casts off his people, and why.

Verse 9 (*last clause*).—The greatest of all calamities for our churches.

Verse 12.—The human and divine estimate of the results of persecution.

Verse 12.—In answer to this complaint. I. God's people lose nothing eventually by their privations. II. The wicked gain nothing by their triumphs. III. God loses none of his glory in his dealings with either.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 13.—Trial of cruel mockings; our conduct under them, comfort in them, and crown from them.

Verse 14.—Unholy proverbs or godless bywords.

Verse 15.—Confessions of a penitent.

Verse 17.—The trial, truth, and triumph of the godly.

Verse 17.—The faithful soul holding fast his integrity.

Verse 17.—What it is to be false to our covenant with God.

Verse 18 (*first clause*).—When we may be sure that our heart has not apostatised.

Verse 18.—I. The position of the heart in religion—it comes first. II. The position of the outer moral life in religion—it follows the heart. III. Necessity of the agreement of the two. IV. The need that both should be faithful to God.

Verse 18.—Connection between the heart and the life, both in constancy and apostacy.

Verse 18.—God's delight in the progress of the upright.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all afflictions, troubles, and discouragements, they meet withal.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 18.—"*Thy ways.*" The ways of God are—1, *righteous* ways; 2, *blessed* ways; 3, *soul-refreshing* ways; 4, *transcendent* ways—ways that transcend all other ways; 5, *soul-strengthening* ways; and 6, sometimes *afflicted*, *perplexed*, and *persecuted* ways.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 21.—Can he not? Will he not?

Verse 21.—A question and an assertion.

Verse 22.—I. Innocence in the midst of suffering, "*sheep.*" II. Honour in the midst of shame, "*for thy sake.*"—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 23.—The cry of a church in sad circumstances. The plaint of a deserted soul.

Verse 24.—Reasons for the withdrawal of divine comfort.

Verse 25.—The great need, the great prayer, the great plea.

Verse 26.—A fit prayer for souls under conviction, for saints under trial or persecution, and for the church under oppression or decay.

PSALM XLV.

TITLE.—*The many titles of this Psalm mark its royalty, its deep and solemn import, and the delight which the writer had in it.* To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim. *The most probable translation of this word is* upon the lilies, *and it is either a poetical title given to this noblest of songs after the Oriental manner, or it may relate to the tune to which it was set, or to the instrument which was meant to accompany it. We incline to the first theory, and if it be the true one, it is easy to see the fitness of borrowing a name for so beautiful, so pure, so choice, so matchless a poem from the golden lilies, whose bright array outshone the glory of Solomon.* For the sons of Korah. *Special singers are appointed for so divine a hymn. King Jesus deserves to be praised not with random, ranting ravings, but with the sweetest and most skilful music of the best trained choristers. The purest hearts in the spiritual temple are the most harmonious songsters in the ears of God; acceptable song is not a matter so much of tuneful voices as of sanctified affections, but in no case should we sing of Jesus with unprepared hearts.* Maschil, *an instructive ode, not an idle lay, or a romancing ballad, but a Psalm of holy teaching, didactic and doctrinal. This proves that it is to be spiritually understood. Blessed are the people who know the meaning of its joyful sound.* A Song of loves. *Not a carnal sentimental love song, but a celestial canticle of everlasting love fit for the tongues and ears of angels.*

SUBJECT.—*Some here see Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter only—they are short-sighted; others see both Solomon and Christ—they are cross-eyed; well-focussed spiritual eyes see here Jesus only, or if Solomon be present at all, it must be like those hazy shadows of passers-by which cross the face of the camera, and therefore are dimly traceable upon a photographic landscape. "The King," the God whose throne is for ever and ever, is no mere mortal and his everlasting dominion is not bounded by Lebanon and Egypt's river. This is no wedding song of earthly nuptials, but an Epithalamium for the Heavenly Bridegroom and his elect spouse.*

DIVISION.—*Verse* 1 *is an announcement of intention, a preface to the song; verse* 3 *adores the matchless beauty of Messiah; and from* 3—9, *he is addressed in admiring ascriptions of praise. Verses* 10, 11, 12, *are spoken to the bride. The church is further spoken of in verses* 13—15, *and the Psalm closes with another address to the King, foretelling his eternal fame,* 16—17.

EXPOSITION.

MY heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer.

1. "*My heart.*" There is no writing like that dictated by the heart. Heartless hymns are insults to heaven. "*Is inditing a good matter.*" A good heart will only be content with good thoughts. Where the fountain is good good streams will flow forth. The learned tell us that the word may be read overfloweth, or as others, boileth or bubbleth up, denoting the warmth of the writer's love, the fulness of his heart, and the consequent richness and glow of his utterance, as though it were the ebullition of his inmost soul, when most full of affection. We have here no single cold expression; the writer is not one who frigidly studies the elegancies and proprieties of poetry, his stanzas are the natural outburst of his soul, comparable to the boiling jets of the geysers of Hecla. As the corn offered in sacrifice was parched in the pan, so is this tribute of love hot with sincere devotion. It is a sad thing when the heart is cold with a good matter, and worse when it is warm with a bad matter, but incomparably well when a warm heart and a good matter meet together. O

that we may often offer to God an acceptable *minchah*, a sweet oblation fresh from the pan of hearts warmed with gratitude and admiration. "*I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.*" This song has "the King" for its only subject, and for the King's honour alone was it composed, well might its writer call it a good matter. The psalmist did not write carelessly; he calls his poem his works, or things which he had made. We are not to offer to the Lord that which costs us nothing. Good material deserves good workmanship. We should well digest in our heart's affections and our mind's meditations any discourse or poem in which we speak of one so great and glorious as our Royal Lord. As our version reads it, the psalmist wrote experimentally things which he had made his own, and personally tasted and handled concerning the King. "*My tongue is the pen of a ready writer,*" not so much for rapidity, for there the tongue always has the preference, but for exactness, elaboration, deliberation, and skilfulness of expression. Seldom are the excited utterances of the mouth equal in real weight and accuracy to the *verba scripta* of a thoughtful accomplished penman; but here the writer, though filled with enthusiasm, speaks as correctly as a practised writer; his utterances therefore are no ephemeral sentences, but such as fall from men who sit down calmly to write for eternity. It is not always that the best of men are in such a key, and when they are they should not restrain the gush of their hallowed feelings. Such a condition of heart in a gifted mind creates that auspicious hour in which poetry pours forth her tuneful numbers to enrich the service of song in the house of the Lord.

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

2. "*Thou.*" As though the King himself had suddenly appeared before him, the psalmist lost in admiration of his person, turns from his preface to address his Lord. A loving heart has the power to realise its object. The eyes of a true heart see more than the eyes of the head. Moreover, Jesus reveals himself when we are pouring forth our affections towards him. It is usually the case that when we are ready Christ appears. If our heart is warm it is an index that the sun is shining, and when we enjoy his heat we shall soon behold his light. "*Thou art fairer than the children of men.*" In person, but especially in mind and character, the King of saints is peerless in beauty. The Hebrew word is doubled, "Beautiful, beautiful art thou." Jesus is so emphatically lovely that words must be doubled, strained, yea, exhausted before he can be described. Among the children of men many have through grace been lovely in character, yet they have each had a flaw; but in Jesus we behold every feature of a perfect character in harmonious proportion. He is lovely everywhere, and from every point of view, but never more so than when we view him in conjugal union with his church; then love gives a ravishing flush of glory to his loveliness. "*Grace is poured into thy lips.*" Beauty and eloquence make a man majestic when they are united; they both dwell in perfection in the all fair, all eloquent Lord Jesus. Grace of person and grace of speech reach their highest point in him. Grace has in the most copious manner been poured upon Christ, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and now grace is in superabundance, poured forth from his lips to cheer and enrich his people. The testimony, the promises, the invitations, the consolations of our King pour forth from him in such volumes of meaning that we cannot but contrast those cataracts of grace with the speech of Moses which did but drop as the rain, and distil as the dew. Whoever in personal communion with the Wellbeloved has listened to his voice will feel that "never man spake like this man." Well did the bride say of him, "his lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." One word from himself dissolved the heart of Saul of Tarsus, and turned him into an apostle, another word raised up John the Divine when fainting in the Isle of Patmos. Oftentimes a sentence from his lips has turned our own midnight into morning, our winter

into spring. "*Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*" Calvin reads it, "*Because God hath blessed thee for ever.*" Christ is blessed, blessed of God, blessed for ever, and this is to us one great reason for his beauty, and the source of the gracious words which proceed out of his lips. The rare endowments of the man Christ Jesus are given him of the Father, that by them his people may be blessed with all spiritual blessings in union with himself. But if we take our own translation, we read that the Father has blessed the Mediator as a reward for all his gracious labours; and right well does he deserve the recompense. Whom God blesses we should bless, and the more so because all his blessedness is communicated to us.

3 Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O *most* mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee.

6 Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

8 All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

9 King's daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

3. "*Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.*" Loving spirits jealous of the Redeemer's glory long to see him putting forth his power to vindicate his own most holy cause. Why should the sword of the Spirit lie still, like a weapon hung up in an armoury; it is sharp and strong, both for cutting and piercing: O that the divine power of Jesus were put forth to use it against error. The words before us represent our great King as urged to arm himself for battle, by placing his sword where it is ready for use. Christ is the true champion of the church, others are but underlings who must borrow strength from him; the single arm of Immanuel is the sole hope of the faithful. Our prayer should be that of this verse. There is at this moment an apparent suspension of our Lord's former power, we must by importunate prayer call him to the conflict, for like the Greeks without Achilles we are soon overcome by our enemies, and we are but dead men if Jesus be not in our midst. "*O most mighty.*" A title well deserved, and not given from empty courtesy like the serenities, excellencies, and highnesses of our fellow mortals—titles, which are but sops for vain glory. Jesus is the truest of heroes. Hero worship in his case alone is commendable. He is mighty to save, mighty in love. "*With thy glory and thy majesty.*" Let thy sword both win thee renown and dominion, or as it may mean, gird on with thy sword thy robes which indicate thy royal splendour. Love delights to see the Beloved arrayed as beseemeth his excellency; she weeps as she sees him in the garments of humiliation, she rejoices to behold him in the vestments of his exaltation. Our precious Christ can never be made too much of. Heaven itself is but just good enough for him. All the pomp that angels and archangels, and thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers can pour at his feet is too little for him. Only his own essential glory is such as fully answers to the desire of his people, who can never enough extol him.

4. "*And in thy majesty ride prosperously.*" The hero-monarch armed and apparelled is now entreated to ascend his triumphal car. Would to God that our Immanuel would come forth in the chariot of love to conquer our spiritual foes and seize by power the souls whom he has bought with blood. "*Because of truth and meekness and righteousness.*" These words may be rendered, "*ride forth upon truth and meekness and righteousness.*"—Three noble chargers to draw the war-chariot of the gospel. In the sense of our translation it is a most potent argument to urge with our Lord that the cause of the true, the humble, and the good, calls for his advocacy. Truth will be ridiculed, meekness will be oppressed, and righteousness slain, unless the God, the Man in whom these precious things are incarnated, shall arise for their vindication. Our earnest petition ought ever to be that Jesus would lay his almighty arm to the work of grace lest the good cause languish and wickedness prevail. "*And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*" Foreseeing the result of divine working, the psalmist prophesies that the uplifted arm of Messiah will reveal to the King's own eyes the terrible overthrow of his foes. Jesus needs no guide but his own right hand, no teacher but his own might; may he instruct us all in what he can perform, by achieving it speedily before our gladdened eyes.

5. "*Thine arrows.*" Our King is master of all weapons: he can strike those who are near and those afar off with equal force. "*Are sharp.*" Nothing that Jesus does is ill done, he uses no blunted shafts, no pointless darts. "*In the heart of the King's enemies.*" Our Captain aims at men's hearts rather than their heads, and he hits them too; point-blank are his shots, and they enter deep into the vital part of man's nature. Whether for love or vengeance, Christ never misses aim, and when his arrows stick, they cause a smart not soon forgotten, a wound which only he can heal. Jesus' arrows of conviction are sharp in the quiver of his word, and sharp when on the bow of his ministers, but they are most known to be so when they find a way into careless hearts. They are *his* arrows, he made them, he shoots them. He makes them sharp, and he makes them enter the heart. May none of us ever fall under the darts of his judgment, for none kill so surely as they. "*Whereby the people fall under thee.*" On either side the slain of the Lord are many when Jesus leads on the war. Nations tremble and turn to him when he shoots abroad his truth. Under his power and presence, men are stricken down as though pricked in the heart. There is no standing against the Son of God when his bow of might is in his hands. Terrible will be that hour when his bow shall be made quite naked, and bolts of devouring fire shall be hurled upon his adversaries: then shall princes fall and nations perish.

6. "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*" To whom can this be spoken but our Lord? The psalmist cannot restrain his adoration. His enlightened eye sees in the royal Husband of the church, God, God to be adored, God reigning, God reigning everlastingly. Blessed sight! Blind are the eyes that cannot see God in Christ Jesus! We never appreciate the tender condescension of our King in becoming one flesh with his church, and placing her at his right hand, until we have fully rejoiced in his essential glory and deity. What a mercy for us that our Saviour is God, for who but a God could execute the work of salvation? What a glad thing it is that he reigns on a throne which will never pass away, for we need both sovereign grace and eternal love to secure our happiness. Could Jesus cease to reign we should cease to be blessed, and were he not God, and therefore eternal, this must be the case. No throne can endure for ever, but that on which God himself sitteth. "*The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*" He is the lawful monarch of all things that be. His rule is founded in right, its law is right, its result is right. Our King is no usurper and no oppressor. Even when he shall break his enemies with a rod of iron, he will do no man wrong; his vengeance and his grace are both in conformity with justice. Hence we trust him without suspicion; he cannot err; no affliction is too severe, for he sends it; no judgment too harsh, for he ordains it. O

blessed hands of Jesus! the reigning power is safe with you. All the just rejoice in the government of the King who reigns in righteousness.

7. "*Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.*" Christ Jesus is not neutral in the great contest between right and wrong: as warmly as he loves the one he abhors the other. What qualifications for a sovereign! what grounds of confidence for a people! The whole of our Lord's life on earth proved the truth of these words; his death to put away sin and bring in the reign of righteousness, sealed the fact beyond all question; his providence by which he rules from his mediatorial throne, when rightly understood, reveals the same; and his final assize will proclaim it before all worlds. We should imitate him both in his love and hate; they are both needful to complete a righteous character. "*Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*" Jesus as Mediator owned God as his God, to whom, being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient. On account of our Lord's perfect life he is now rewarded with superior joy. Others there are to whom grace has given a sacred fellowship with him, but by their universal consent and his own merit, he is prince among them, the gladdest of all because the cause of all their gladness. At Oriental feasts oil was poured on the heads of distinguished and very welcome guests; God himself anoints the man Christ Jesus, as he sits at the heavenly feasts, anoints him as a reward for his work, with higher and fuller joy than any else can know; thus is the Son of man honoured and rewarded for all his pains. Observe the indisputable testimony to Messiah's Deity in verse six, and to his manhood in the present verse. Of whom could this be written but of Jesus of Nazareth? Our Christ is our Elohim. Jesus is God with us.

8. "*All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.*" The divine anointing causes fragrance to distil from the robes of the Mighty Hero. He is delightful to every sense, to the eye most fair, to the ear most gracious, to the spiritual nostril most sweet. The excellences of Jesus are all most precious, comparable to the rarest spices; they are most varied, and to be likened not to myrrh alone, but to all the perfumes blended in due proportion. The Father always finds a pleasure in him, in him he is well pleased; and all regenerated spirits rejoice in him, for he is made of God unto us, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Note that not only is Jesus most sweet, but even his garments are so; everything that he has to do with is perfumed by his person. "*All*" his garments are thus fragrant; not some of them, but all; we delight as much in his purple of dominion as in the white linen of his priesthood, his mantle as our prophet is as dear to us as his seamless coat as our friend. All his dress is fragrant with all sweetness. To attempt to spiritualise each spice here mentioned would be unprofitable, the evident sense is that all sweetnesses meet in Jesus, and are poured forth wherever he is present. "*Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*" The abode of Jesus now is imperial in splendour, ivory and gold but faintly image his royal seat; there is he made glad in the presence of the Father, and in the company of his saints. Oh, to behold him with his perfumed garments on! The very smell of him from afar ravishes our spirit, what must it be to be on the other side of the pearl gate, within the palace of ivory, amid those halls of Zion, "conjubilant with song," where is the throne of David, and the abiding presence of the Prince! To think of his gladness, to know that *he* is full of joy, gives gladness at this moment to our souls. We poor exiles can sing in our banishment since our King, our Wellbeloved, has come to his throne.

9. "*Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women.*" Our Lord's courts lack not for courtiers, and those the fairest and noblest. Virgin souls are maids of honour to the court, the true lilies of heaven. The lowly and pure in heart are esteemed by the Lord Jesus as his most familiar friends, their place in his palace is not among the menials but near the throne. The day will come when those who are "kings' daughters" literally will count it their greatest honour to serve the church, and, meanwhile every believing sister is spiritually

a King's daughter, a member of the royal family of heaven. "*Upon thy right hand,*" in the place of love, honour, and power, "*did stand the queen in gold of Ophir:*" the church shares her Lord's honour and happiness, he sets her in the place of dignity, he clothes her with the best of the best. Gold is the richest of metals, and Ophir gold the purest known. Jesus bestows nothing inferior or of secondary value upon his beloved church. In imparted and imputed righteousness the church is divinely arrayed. Happy those who are members of a church so honoured, so beloved; unhappy those who persecute the beloved people, for as a husband will not endure that his wife should be insulted or maltreated, so neither will the heavenly Husband; he will speedily avenge his own elect. Mark, then, the solemn pomp of the verses we have read. The King is seen with rapture, he girds himself as a warrior, robes himself as a monarch, mounts his chariot, darts his arrows, and conquers his foes. Then he ascends his throne with his sceptre in his hand, fills the palace hall with perfume brought from his secret chambers, his retinue stand around him, and, fairest of all, his bride is at his right hand, with daughters of subject princes as her attendants. Faith is no stranger to this sight, and every time she looks she adores, she loves, she rejoices, she expects.

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.

10. "*Hearken, O daughter, and consider.*" Ever is this the great duty of the church. Faith cometh by hearing, and confirmation by consideration. No precept can be more worthy of the attention of those who are honoured to be espoused unto Christ than that which follows. "*And incline thine ear.*" Lean forward that no syllable may be unheard. The whole faculties of the mind should be bent upon receiving holy teaching. "*Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*" To renounce the world is not easy, but it must be done by all who are affianced to the Great King, for a divided heart he cannot endure; it would be misery to the beloved one as well as dishonour to her Lord. Evil acquaintances, and even those who are but neutral, must be forsaken, they can confer no benefit, they must inflict injury. The house of our nativity is the house of sin—we were shapen in iniquity; the carnal mind is enmity against God, we must come forth of the house of fallen nature, for it is built in the City of Destruction. Not that natural ties are broken by grace, but ties of the sinful nature, bonds of graceless affinity. We have much to forget as well as to learn, and the unlearning is so difficult that only diligent hearing, and considering, and bending of the whole soul to it, can accomplish the work; and even these would be too feeble did not divine grace assist. Yet why should we remember the Egypt from which we came out? Are the leeks and the garlic, and the onions anything, when the iron bondage, and the slavish tasks, and the death-dealing Pharaoh of hell are remembered? We part with folly for wisdom; with bubbles for eternal joys; with deceit for truth; with misery for bliss; with idols for the living God. O that Christians were more mindful of the divine precept here recorded; but, alas! worldliness abounds; the church is defiled; and the glory of the Great King is veiled. Only when the whole church leads the separated life will the full splendour and power of Christianity shine forth upon the world.

11. "*So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.*" Whole-hearted love is the duty and bliss of the marriage state in every case, but especially so in this lofty mystic marriage. The church must forsake all others and cleave to Jesus only, or she will not please him nor enjoy the full manifestation of his love. What less can he ask, what less may she dare propose than to be wholly his? Jesus

sees a beauty in his church, a beauty which he delights in most when it is not marred by worldliness. He has always been most near and precious to his saints when they have cheerfully taken up his cross and followed him without the camp. His Spirit is grieved when they mingle themselves among the people and learn their ways. No great and lasting revival of religion can be granted us till the professed lovers of Jesus prove their affection by coming out from an ungodly world, being separated, and touching not the unclean thing. "*For he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.*" He has royal rights still; his condescending grace does not lessen but rather enforce his authority. Our Saviour is also our Ruler. The husband is the head of the wife; the love he bears her does not lessen but strengthen her obligation to obey. The church must reverence Jesus, and bow before him in prostrate adoration; his tender union with her gives her liberty, but not license; it frees her from all other burdens, but places his easy yoke upon her neck. Who would wish it to be otherwise? The service of God is heaven in heaven, and perfectly carried out it is heaven upon earth. Jesus, thou art he whom thy church praises in her unceasing songs, and adores in her perpetual service. Teach us to be wholly thine. Bear with us, and work by thy Spirit in us till thy will is done by us on earth as it is in heaven.

12. "*And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.*" When the church abounds in holiness, she shall know no lack of homage from the surrounding people. Her glory shall then impress and attract the heathen around, till they also unite in doing honour to her Lord. The power of missions abroad lies at home: a holy church will be a powerful church. Nor shall there be lack of treasure in her coffers when grace is in her heart; the free gifts of a willing people shall enable the workers for God to carry on their sacred enterprises without stint. Commerce shall send in its revenue to endow, not with forced levies and imperial taxes, but with willing gifts the church of the Great King. "*Even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.*" Not by pandering to their follies, but by testifying against their sins, shall the wealthy be won to the faith of Jesus. They shall come not to favour the church but to beg for her favour. She shall not be the hireling of the great, but as a queen shall she dispense her favours to the suppliant throng of the rich among the people. We go about to beg for Christ like beggars for alms, and many who should know better will make compromises and become reticent of unpopular truth to please the great ones of the earth; not so will the true bride of Christ degrade herself, when her sanctification is more deep and more visible; then will the hearts of men grow liberal, and offerings from afar, abundant and continual, shall be presented at the throne of the Pacific Prince.

13 The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold.

14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the king's palace.

13. "*The king's daughter is all glorious within.*" Within her secret chambers her glory is great. Though unseen of men her Lord sees her, and commends her. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be. Or the passage may be understood as meaning within herself—her beauty is not outward only or mainly; the choicest of her charms are to be found in her heart, her secret character, her inward desires. Truth and wisdom in the hidden parts are what the Lord regards; mere skin-deep beauty is nothing in his eyes. The church is of royal extraction, of imperial dignity, for she is a king's daughter; and she has been purified and renewed in nature, for she is glorious within.

Note the word *all*. The Bridegroom was said to have all his garments perfumed, and now the bride is *all* glorious within—entireness and completeness are great points. There is no mixture of ill savour in Jesus, nor shall there be alloy of unholiness in his people, his church shall be presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. "*Her clothing is of wrought gold.*" Best material and best workmanship. How laboriously did our Lord work out the precious material of his righteousness into a vesture for his people! no embroidery of golden threads can equal that master-piece of holy art. Such clothing becomes one so honoured by relationship to the Great King. The Lord looks to it that nothing shall be wanting to the glory and beauty of his bride.

14. "*She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.*" The day comes when the celestial marriage shall be openly celebrated, and these words describe the nuptial procession, wherein the queen is brought to her royal Husband attended by her handmaidens. In the latter-day glory, and in the consummation of all things, the glory of the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be seen by all the universe with admiration. While she was within doors, and her saints hidden ones, the church was glorious; what will be her splendour when she shall appear in the likeness of her Lord in the day of his manifestation? The finest embroidery is but a faint image of the perfection of the church when sanctified by the Spirit. This verse tells us of the ultimate rest of the church—the King's own bosom; of the way she comes to it, she is *brought* by the power of sovereign grace; of the time when this is done—in the future, "*she shall be,*" it does not yet appear; of the state in which she shall come—clad in richest array, and attended by brightest spirits. "*The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.*" Those who love and serve the church for her Lord's sake shall share in her bliss "in that day." In one sense they are a part of the church, but for the sake of the imagery they are represented as maids of honour; and, though the figure may seem incongruous, they are represented as brought to the King with the same loving familiarity as the bride, because the true servants of the church are of the church, and partake in all her happiness. Note that those who are admitted to everlasting communion with Christ, are pure in heart—*virgins*, pure in company—"*her companions,*" pure in walk—"*that follow her.*" Let none hope to be brought into heaven at last who are not purified now.

15. "*With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought.*" Joy becomes a marriage feast. What joy will that be which will be seen at the feasts of paradise when all the redeemed shall be brought home! Gladness in the saints themselves, and rejoicing from the angels shall make the halls of the New Jerusalem ring again with shoutings. "*They shall enter into the King's palace.*" Their peaceful abodes shall be where Jesus the King reigns in state for ever. They shall not be shut out but shut in. Rights of free entrance into the holiest of all shall be accorded them. Brought by grace, they shall enter into glory. If there was joy in the bringing, what in the entering? What in the abiding? The glorified are not field labourers in the plains of heaven, but sons who dwell at home, princes of the blood, resident in the royal palace. Happy hour when we shall enjoy all this and forget the sorrows of time in the triumphs of eternity.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

16. "*Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.*" The ancient saints who stood as fathers in the service of the Great King have all passed away; but a spiritual seed is found to fill their places. The veterans depart, but volunteers fill up the vacant places. The line of grace never becomes extinct. As long as time shall last, the true apostolical succession will be maintained. "*Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*" Servants of Christ are kings. Where

a man has preached successfully, and evangelised a tribe or nation, he gets to himself more than regal honours, and his name is like the name of the great men that be upon the earth. Jesus is the king-maker. Ambition of the noblest kind shall win her desire in the army of Christ; immortal crowns are distributed to his faithful soldiers. The whole earth shall yet be subdued for Christ, and honoured are they, who shall, through grace, have a share in the conquest—these shall reign with Christ at his coming.

Verse 17.—"*I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations.*" Jehovah by the prophet's mouth promises to the Prince of Peace eternal fame as well as a continuous progeny. His name is his fame, his character, his person; these are dear to his people now—they never can forget them; and it shall be so as long as men exist. Names renowned in one generation have been unknown to the next era, but the laurels of Jesus shall ever be fresh, his renown ever new. God will see to this; his providence and his grace shall make it so. The fame of Messiah is not left to human guardianship; the Eternal guarantees it, and his promise never fails. All down the ages the memories of Gethsemane and Calvary shall glow with unextinguishable light; nor shall the lapse of time, the smoke of error, or the malice of hell be able to dim the glory of the Redeemer's fame. "*Therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*" They shall confess thee to be what thou art, and shall render to thee in perpetuity the homage due. Praise is due from every heart to him who loved us, and redeemed us by his blood; this praise will never be fully paid, but will be ever a standing and growing debt. His daily benefits enlarge our obligations, let them increase the number of our songs. Age to age reveals more of his love, let every year swell the volume of the music of earth and heaven, and let thunders of song roll up in full diapason to the throne of him that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death.

"Let him be crowned with majesty
Who bowed his head to death,
And be his honours sounded high
By all things that have breath."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*Upon Shoshannim,*" or upon *lilies.* It will be remembered that lilies were an emblem of purity and loveliness, and were introduced as such in the building of Solomon's temple (see 1 Kings vii. 19, 22, 26; 2 Chron. iv. 5); and the church is compared in the Canticles to a "lily among thorns." Cant. ii. 2. The Psalms which bear this title, "upon lilies," are the present, the sixty-ninth and the eightieth (cp. Ps. lx.); and all these contain prophecies of Christ and his church. The sixtieth is a parallel to the forty-fourth, and represents her supplicating appeal to God, and Christ's victories. The sixty-ninth displays the victories gained by Christ through suffering. The eightieth is also parallel to the forty-fourth and sixtieth, a plaintive lament of the church in distress and a supplicating cry for deliverance. All these three Psalms are (if we may venture to use this expression) like the voice of the "lily among thorns." That there is, therefore, some reference here to the spiritual meaning of the word שֹׁשַׁנִּים, or *lilies*, in this title, seems at least to be probable.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Title.—We think that *Shoshannim* signifies an instrument of six strings, or a song of rejoicing.—*Augustin Calmet*, 1672—1757.

Kitto, on the other hand, says that the word is so clearly *lilies*, that he is disinclined to go out of the way to bring in the Hebrew word for six.

Title.—"*To the chief musician upon Shoshannim.*" Some would have it that instruments whereon were many engravings of lilies, which are six-leaved flowers, are here meant. And, indeed, some interpreters, because of that derivation of the word, do thus translate it, *upon Shoshannim*, that is, *upon lilies;* and that either in reference to their wedding garlands, that were made much of lilies, or as intending by these lilies Christ and his church.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Title.—"*A song.*" The word שִׁיר, *shir*, the meaning of which (*song*), is unquestioned, is prefixed to many of the Psalms, three times simply and thirteen times in connection with *Mizmor*. There is no mark of peculiarity in their composition. The meaning of the word seems to be discriminated from *Mizmor*, as signifying a thing to be sung, with reference to its poetical structure.—*John Jebb.*

Whole Psalm.—The Psalter, which sets forth so much truth respecting the person and work of Christ—truth more precious than gold and sweeter than the honeycomb—is not silent respecting the bond subsisting between him and his people, THE MYSTICAL UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. When a prince sets his affections on a woman of lowly rank, and takes her home to be his wife, the two are so united that her debts become his, his wealth and honours become hers. Now, that there is formed between Christ and the church, between Christ and every soul that will consent to receive him, a connection, of which the most intimate of all natural relations is the analogue and type, we have already found to be not only taught in the Psalms, but to be implied in the very structure of many of them. He takes his people's sins upon him, and they receive the right to become the sons of God: the One Spirit of God wherewith he was baptised without measure, dwells in them according to the measure of the grace that is given them. I will only add further, that this union, besides being implied in so many places, is expressly set forth in one most glorious Psalm—the Nuptial Song of Christ and the Church—which has for its peculiar theme the home-bringing of Christ's elect, that they may be joined to him in a union that shall survive the everlasting hills.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 1.—"*My heart is inditing a good matter,*" and then, "*My tongue shall be like the pen of a ready writer.*" Oh, then I shall go merrily on in his service, when I have matter prepared in my heart. And, indeed, as the mariner sees further new stars the further he sails, he loseth sight of the old ones and discovers new; so the growing Christian, the further he sails in religion he discovers new wants, new Scriptures affect him, new trials afflict him, new business he finds with God, and forgetting those things that are behind, he reacheth after those things that are before, and so finds every day new business with the Lord his God; and he that's busy trifles not; the more business the less distraction.—*Richard Steele.*

Verse 1.—"*My heart is inditing a good matter.*" רָחַשׁ (*rakhash*), *boileth or bubbleth up;* denotes the language of the heart full and ready for utterance.—*Victorinus Bythner.*

Verse 1.—"*My heart is inditing a good matter.*" Here you have the work of the Spirit of prophecy. By his operation the good "matter" is engendered in the psalmist's bosom, and now his heart is heaving and labouring under the load. It is just beginning to throw it up, like water from a fountain, that it may flow off in the channel of the tongue. Here, therefore, you have some insight given you of the manner of the operation of the Spirit in the heart of man. The psalmist says his heart is doing what the spirit is doing in his heart. The heart does it, indeed, but it is the Spirit's working. The psalmist took all the interest and pleasure in his subject that he could have done, if the Spirit had had nothing to do with it; for when the Spirit works, he works not only by the heart, but in the heart; he seizes upon all its affections, every fibre of it is bent to his will.—*George Harpur, in* "*Christ in the Psalms,*" 1862.

Verse 1.—"*Good matter,*" the goodspell, or *gospel.—Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1.—A similitude taken from the *mincah*, or *meat-offering* in the law, which was dressed in the frying-pan (Levit. vii. 9), and there boiled in oil, being made of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil (Levit. ii. 5), and afterwards was presented to the Lord by the priest, ver. 8. Here the matter of this Psalm is as the *mincah* or oblation, which with the oil, the grace of the Spirit, was boiled and prepared in the prophet's heart, and now presented.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 1.—It is reported of Origen, saith Erasmus, that he was ever earnest, but most of all when he discoursed of Christ. Of Johannes Mollius, a Bononian, it is said, that whenever he spake of Jesus Christ, his eyes dropped, for he was fraught with a mighty fervency of God's Holy Spirit; and like the Baptist, he was first a burning (boiling or bubbling), and then a shining light.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*Touching the king.*" It does not all concern the king immediately, for much of it concerns the queen, and about one-half of it is directly addressed to her. But it relates to him inasmuch as it relates to his family. Christ ever identifies himself with his people; so that, whatever is done to them, is done to himself. Their interests are his.—*George Harpur.*

Verse 1.—"*My tongue*" shall be like the pen of one that takes minutes or writes shorthand: for I shall speak very briefly, and not in words at length, or so as to be understood in a literal sense, but in figures and emblems. *From "Holy David and his old English Translators cleared,"* 1706. [*Anon.*]

Verse 1.—"*The pen.*" We call the prophets the *penmen* of Scripture, whereas they were but the *pen.—Matthew Henry.*

Verse 2.—"*Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips.*" Thus he begins to set forth his beauty, wherein is the delightfulness of any person; so is it with the soul when God hath made known to man his own filthiness and uncomeliness through sin, and that only by Jesus sin is taken away; oh, how beautiful is this face, the first sight of him! Secondly, "*Full of grace are thy lips:*" here is the second commendation; which is, when Jesus hath opened his lips to us, from them he pours out grace into our soul, when he makes known the Father to us, and speaks peace to all that are far off and near; when he calls, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you:" and all this is because God hath blessed him for ever; we are assured he comes from God, and that he and his works are eternal, and therefore all his grace poured out upon us shall remain with us, and make us blessed for ever; for he is the Word of God, and he speaks the mind of God, for he speaks nothing but what he hath heard from the Father; and when he speaks to our souls with his Word, the Spirit is given, a certain testimony to our soul that we are the sons of God, and a pledge of our inheritance; for the Spirit and the Word cannot be separated.—*Richard Coore, in "Christ set forth."*

Verse 2.—"*Thou art fairer than the children of men,*" etc. Nothing can be more beautiful than this abrupt way of discourse. The prophet sets out with a professed design to speak of the king. But as if in the moment he had so intended, the glorious *Person* of whom he was going to speak appeared to his view, he instantly leaves every other consideration to speak to him himself. And what a rapturous address he makes! He first describes the glories, the beauties, the astonishing loveliness, of his *person.* Though to a carnal eye there was no beauty to desire him, his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men, yet to an eye truly enlightened, he is the king in his beauty, fairer, as the glorious *Mediator*, the Head, the Bridegroom of his Church and people, than all the children of men. And, in the Father's view, so greatly beloved, so truly glorious, that *grace was poured into his lips.* Reader, observe the expression; not simply grace put into his heart, for the holiness and purity of his person, but poured into his lips, that, like the

honey, it might drop upon his people, and be for ever communicated to all his redeemed, in an endless perpetuity of all suited blessings here, and glory hereafter.—*Robert Hawker, D.D.*

Verse 2.—"*Thou art fairer than the children of men.*" Are you for *beauty?* That takes with most: for this none like Christ. For beauty and comeliness he infinitely surpasses both men and angels. We read of Moses, that he was exceeding fair; and of David, that he was ruddy, and of a beautiful countenance; and Josephus reports of the one of them, that all that saw him were amazed at and enamoured of his beauty. Oh, but what was their beauty to Christ's? Were their beauty, and with theirs the beauty of men and angels put together, it would all be nothing to the beauty of Christ; not so much as the light of a farthing candle is to the light of the sun at noon-day.—*Edward Pearse in "The Best Match,"* 1673.

Verse 2.—"*Thou art fairer,*" etc. Fair he was (1) in his *conception*, conceived in purity, and a fair angel brought the news. Fair (2) in his *nativity: ὡραῖος* is the word in the Septuagint, *tempustivus, in time*, that is, all things are beautiful in their time, Eccl. iii. 11. And *in the fulness of time* it was that he was born, and a fair star pointed to him. Fair (3) in his *childhood;* he grew up in grace and favour, Luke ii. 52. The doctors were much taken with him. Fair (4) in his *manhood;* had he not been so, says S. Jerome, had there not been something admirable in his countenance and presence, some heavenly beauty, the apostles and the whole world (as the Pharisees themselves confess) would not so suddenly have gone after him. Fair (5) in his *transfiguration*, white as the light, or as the snow, his face glittering as the sun (Matt. xvii. 2), even to the ravishing the very soul of S. Peter, that "he knew not what he said," could let his eyes dwell upon that face for ever, and never come down the mount again. Fair (6) in his *passion. Nihil indecorum*, no uncomeliness, in his nakedness; his very wounds, and the bloody prints of the whips and scourges drew an *ecce* from the mouth of Pilate: "Behold the man!" the sweetness of his countenance and carriage in the midst of filth and spittle, whips and buffets. His very comeliness upon the cross, and his giving up the ghost, made the centurion cry out, he "*was the Son of God:*" there appeared so sweet a majesty, so heavenly a lustre in him through that very darkness that encompassed him. Fair (7) in his *resurrection;* so subtle a beauty, that mortal eyes, even the eyes of his own disciples, were not able to see or apprehend it, but when he veiled it from them. Fair (8) in his *ascension;* made his disciples stand gazing after him so long (as if they never could look long enough upon him), till an angel is sent from heaven to rebuke them, to look home, Acts i. 2.—*Mark Frank.*

Verse 2.—O fair sun, and fair moon, and fair stars, and fair flowers, and fair roses, and fair lilies; but O ten thousand thousand times fairer Lord Jesus! Alas! I have wronged him in making the comparison this way. O black sun and moon! but O fair Lord Jesus! O black flowers, and black lilies, and roses! but O fair, fair, ever fair, Lord Jesus! O black heaven! but O fair Christ! O black angels! but O surpassingly fair Lord Jesus!—*Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 2.—In one Christ we may contemplate and must confess all the beauty and loveliness both of heaven and earth; the beauty of heaven is God, the beauty of earth is man; the beauty of heaven and earth together is this God-man.—*Edward Hyde, D.D.*, 1658.

Verse 2.—"*Thou.*" "I have a passion," observed Count Zinzendorf in one of his discourses to the congregation at Herrnhut, "and it is He—He only."

Verse 2.—"*Thou art fairer.*" Hebrew, Thou art *double fairer;* the Hebrew word is doubled, *ad corroborandum*, saith Kimchi.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 2.—"*Grace is poured into thy lips.*" This is said as if this grace were a gift, and not something inherent in our Lord himself. And is not this exactly what we learn from the histories of the evangelists? Before Jesus went forth to the work of his public mission, the Holy Ghost descended from heaven like

a dove and lit upon him. The Spirit who imparts all its graces to the church of Christ, imparted his graces to Christ himself. Not that the Son of God needed the anointing of the Spirit of God, but he suffered it to be so that he might be in all things like his brethren. If he was to be their example, he must show them wherein their great strength lay. They see in him the fruits of the Holy Ghost who is promised to themselves. All that Christ ever did as the Head and Representative of his people, he did by that very Spirit which is still resident in his church.—*George Harpur.*

Verse 2.—"*Grace is poured into thy lips.*" "*Full of grace are thy lips.*" Full of grace for the *matter*, and full of grace for the *manner*. I. For the *matter*, he delivered acceptable doctrine: "The law was given by Moses, but grace came by Jesus Christ." John i. 17. Moses had harsh and hard words in his law; "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" but Christ on the contrary speaks better things, the first words in his first sermon are, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 3. He cometh unto his people, *cum verbo gratiæ, cum osculo gratiæ*, saith Augustine: his lips are *full of grace*, that is, pouring out gracious words abundantly. Matt. xi. 28; John iii. 16; Luke iv. 18. "His lips are like lilies dropping down myrrh" (Cant. v. 13); all that heard him wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, Luke iv. 22. II. For the *manner*, he taught not as the scribes; he spake so sweetly that the very catch poll officers, astonished at his words, gave this testimony, "Never man spake like this man," John vii. 46. He spake so graciously that the apostles forsook all things and followed him; at his call Andrew left his nets straightway, James and John their father without tarrying, Matthew from the receipt of custom, Zaccheus from the like worldly course came hastily to receive him joyfully. Mark x. 28; Matt. iv. 20, 21; ix. 9; Luke xix. 6. Nay, beloved, he was so powerful an orator, that the very winds and waves obeyed his word, Mark iv. 39. It is reported in Holy Writ that all princes and people were desirous of hearing Solomon's eloquence; the Queen of Sheba wondering at the same, cried out, "Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom," 1 Kings x. 8. Solomon is type here, but Christ is the truth; and this showeth evidently that Christ is not a tyrant, but a mild prince, persuading obedience plausibly, not compelling his people violently; his sayings are his *sceptre* and his sword: his piercing exhortations are, as it were, his *sharp arrows* by which his followers are subdued unto him.

To conclude this argument, his fair words (as the Scripture speaks) "are as an honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" (Prov. xvi. 24): "an honeycomb," and what more toothsome? "sweetness to the soul and health to the bones;" and what, I pray, more wholesome? The good man's soul is Christ's own spouse, to which he speaks a great many ways graciously; sometimes correcting, and what stronger argument of love? for "whom he loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. xii. 6); sometimes instructing, and his gospel is able to make "the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 17); sometimes wooing in amorous terms, as in his love-song everywhere: "my beloved," "my sister," "my spouse," "the fairest among women," "my love," "my dove," etc.; sometimes promising, and that both the blessings of this life present (Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: etc., Isaiah xli. 10), and of that life which is to come. John xvii. 21, 24. But Christ's excellent intercession every day to God the Father, appearing in the court of heaven, and as an advocate pleading for us, is yet fuller of grace; for if Caleb easily granted his daughter's request, and bestowed on her "the springs above and the springs beneath" (Judg. i. 15), how shall Almighty God (whose mercies are above all his works) deny the suits of such a Son in whom he is well pleased?—*John Boys.*

Verse 2.—"*Grace is poured into thy lips.*" The former clause noted his inward perfections: and this signifies his ability and readiness to communicate them to others.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—Never were there such words of love and sweetness spoken by any man as by him : never was there such a loving and tender heart as the heart of Jesus Christ : "*Grace was poured into his lips.*" Certainly never were there such words of love, sweetness, and tenderness spoken here upon this earth as those last words of his which were uttered a little before his sufferings, and are recorded in the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th chapters of John. Read over all the books of love and friendship that were ever written by any of the sons of men, they do all come far short of those melting strains of love that are there expressed. So sweet and amiable was the conversation of Jesus Christ, that it is reported of the apostle Peter in the Ecclesiastical History, that after Christ's ascension he wept so abundantly, that he was always seen wiping his face from the tears ; and being asked why he wept so, he answered, He could not choose but weep as often as he thought of that most sweet conversation of Jesus Christ.—*John Row.*

Verse 3.—"*Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.*" The sword, according to ancient custom was hung in a belt put round the shoulders, and reaching down to the thigh. It was suspended on the back part of the thigh, almost to the ground, but was not girded upon it ; the horseman's sword was fixed on the saddle by a girth. When David, in spirit invites the Redeemer of the church to gird his sword upon his thigh, and the spouse says of the valiant of Israel, "every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night" (Cant. iii. 8), they do not mean that the weapon was literally bound upon their thigh, but hung in the girdle on the back part of it ; for this was the mode in which, by the universal testimony of ancient writers, the infantry wore their swords. It is still the practice in the East to wear swords in this manner, for Chardin informs us, that "the Eastern people wear their swords hanging down at length ;, and the Turks wear their swords on horseback, and on their thigh." But in his poetical invitation to the Redeemer, to gird his sword upon his thigh, David manifestly points to some special occasion of solemn and official character ; and a clear light is thrown upon his meaning by a custom to this day observed in the East. "When a Persian or an Ottoman prince *ascends the throne*," says Mr. Morier, "he girds on his sabre. Mohammed Jaffer, for example, was proclaimed by the Khan, governor *pro tempore*, till the arrival of his brother, and was invested in this dignity by the *girding of a sword upon his thigh*, an honour which he accepted with a reluctance perhaps not wholly feigned."—"This ceremony," says Dr. Davey, giving an account of an Eastern coronation, "remained to be performed before the prince could be considered completely king—it was that of choosing a new name, and putting on the regal sword. The prince went in great state to the temple, where he presented offerings, and then, the sword having been girded on his thigh, the priest presented a pot of sandal-powder, in which the prince, who *may now be called* king, dipped his fingers."

From these anecdotes, it is evident girding a sword on the thigh is part of the ceremony of royal inauguration ; and that when the psalmist addresses the Messiah, he refers to his receiving the honours and powers of the Lord of all.—*G. Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy sword.*" The word of God is compared to such a weapon, for the apostle informs us that it is quick, or living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and laying open the thoughts and intents of the heart. It must be observed, however, that this description of the word of God is applicable to it only when Christ girds it on, and employs it as his sword. Of what use is a sword, even though it be the sword of Goliath, while it lies still in its scabbard, or is grasped by the powerless hand of an infant? In those circumstances it can neither conquer nor defend, however well suited it might be to do both in the hand of a warrior. It is the same with the sword of the Spirit. While it lies still in its scabbard, or is wielded only by the infantile hand of Christ's ministers, it is a powerless and useless weapon ;

a weapon at which the weakest sinner can laugh, and against which he can defend himself with the utmost ease. But not so when he who is the Most Mighty girds it on. Then it becomes a weapon of tremendous power, a weapon resistless as the bolt of heaven. "Is not my word like a fire, and a hammer, saith the Lord, which breaketh the rock in pieces?" It is indeed, for what can be more efficacious and irresistible than a weapon sharper than a two-edged sword, wielded by the arm of omnipotence? What must his sword be whose glance is lightning? Armed with this weapon, the Captain of our salvation cuts his way to the sinner with infinite ease, though surrounded by rocks and mountains, scatters his strongholds and refuges of lies, and with a mighty blow cleaves asunder his heart of adamant, and lays him prostrate and trembling at his feet. Since such are the effects of this weapon in the hand of Christ, it is with the utmost propriety that the psalmist begins by requesting him *to gird it on*, and not suffer it to be inactive in its scabbard, or powerless in the feeble grasp of his ministers.—*Edward Payson.*

Verse 3.—"*O most mighty.*" Christ is almighty, and so able to make good all that he speaketh, and to make his word of precept, promise, and threatening effectual unto the errand for which it is sent.—*David Dickson.*

Verses 3, 4.—We may reflect with pleasure on the glorious cause in which Christ is engaged, and the holy war which he carries on, and in which he shall prosper. It is the cause of truth, of meekness, and righteousness. His gospel, his sword, which is the word of God, tends to rectify our errors by truth; to control our passions by that meekness which it promotes, and to regulate our lives by the laws of righteousness which it inculcates. Let us rejoice that this sacred cause has hitherto prospered, and shall prosper.—*Job Orton*, 1717—1783.

Verse 4.—"*And in thy majesty ride prosperously,*" etc. The wheels of Christ's chariot, whereupon he rideth when he goeth to conquer and subdue new converts to his kingdom, are *majesty*, *truth*, *meekness*, *righteousness*, manifested in the preaching of his gospel; *majesty*, when the stately magnificence of his person and offices is declared; *truth*, when the certainty of all that he teacheth in Scripture is known; *meekness*, when his grace and mercy is offered to rebels; and *righteousness*, when justification by faith in his name is clearly set forth. Christ goeth no voyage in vain, he cometh not short of his intent and purpose, but doth the work for which he cometh, preaching the gospel; *in his majesty, truth, meekness, and righteousness, he rideth prosperously.—David Dickson.*

Verse 4.—"*Ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.*" The literal translation would be, "Ride on the word of truth, and the meekness of righteousness," and so the Syriac has it. If this rendering be adopted, the meaning will then be, that the great object of Christ's gospel was to vindicate the cause of truth and righteousness in the world. Christ is said to ride on the word of truth, because the knowledge of the truth depends on the word—it is by the word that truth is made known. He is said to ride on the meekness or humility of righteousness, because meekness or humility is its distinguishing characteristic. The former relates to what man is to believe, the latter to how he is to live.—*George Harpur.*

Verse 4.—"*Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*" This expression seems only used to imply, either that by his power he should be enabled to do terrible things, because teaching enables men to do what they are taught, or that by his almighty power he should experimentally see what great and terrible things should be done by him.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 5.—"*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies.*" In a still bolder metaphor the arrows which are discharged from the bow of Christ are the preachers of the gospel, especially the apostles and evangelists. "*His sagittis,*" says S. Jerome, "*totus orbis vulneratus et captus est.*" Paul, the apostle, was an arrow of the Lord, discharged from his bow from Jerusalem to

Illyricum, and from Illyricum to Spain, flying from east to west, and subduing Christ's enemies beneath his feet.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5.—While beseeching the Redeemer to ride forth prosperously, and predicting his success, he seems suddenly to have seen his prayers answered and his predictions fulfilled. He saw his all-conquering Prince gird on his resistless sword, array himself in glory and majesty, ascend the chariot of his gospel, display the banner of his cross, and ride forth, as on the wings of the wind, while the tremendous voice of a herald proclaimed before him: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," exalt the valleys, and level the hills; make the crooked ways straight, and the rough places plain; for, behold, the Lord God comes; he comes with a strong hand, his reward is with him, and his work before him. From the bright and fiery cloud which enveloped his chariot, and concealed it from mortal eyes, he saw sharp arrows of conviction shot forth on every side, deeply wounding the obdurate hearts of sinners, and prostrating them in crowds around his path, while his right hand extended raised them again, and healed the wounds which his arrows had made; and his omnipotent voice spoke peace to their despairing souls, and bade them follow in his train, and witness and share in his triumph. From the same bright cloud he saw the vengeful lightnings flashing thick and dreadful, to blast and consume everything that opposed his progress; he saw sin, and death, and hell, with all its legions, baffled, defeated, and flying in trembling consternation before him; he saw them overtaken, bound, and chained to his triumphant chariot wheels; while enraptured voices were heard from heaven exclaiming, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ." Such was the scene which seems to have burst upon the ravished sight of the entranced prophet. Transported with the view, he exclaims, "*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.*"—*Edward Payson.*

Verse 5.—"*The king's enemies,*" is not simply an expression for "Thy enemies," as some think, but rather implies that Christ's kingship is the ground of their enmity; just as in the second Psalm their cry was, "Let us break their *bands* asunder."—*George Harpur.*

Verse 6.—"*Thy throne, O God.*" The original word is, probably vocative, both in the Greek and in the Hebrew; and is so taken by modern Unitarians, who seek their refuge by explaining away θεός.—*Henry Alford, D.D.*, on Heb. i. 8.

Verse 7.—"*Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.*" Many a one loves righteousness, but would not be its champion; such a love is not Christ's love. Many a one hates iniquity, not for its own sake, but for the sake of its consequences; such a hate is not Christ's hate. To be like Christ we must love righteousness as he loved, and hate wickedness as he hated. To love and hate as he loves and hates is to be perfect as he is perfect. The perfection of this love and hate is moral perfection.—*George Harpur.*

Verse 7.—"*Therefore.*" Observe how usual it is to impute Christ's exaltation to his merits. God blessed him for ever, as in the second verse of this Psalm (if such be the sense of that verse), *because* he was fairer than the children of men, and grace was poured into his lips. And so the apostle. God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name, *because* he had humbled himself, and become obedient unto death. And here God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, *because* he loved righteousness and hated iniquity.—*George Harpur.*

Verse 7.—"*Therefore.*" He says not, "Wherefore he anointed thee in order to thy being God, or King, or Son, or Word;" for so he was before, and is for ever, as has been shown; but rather, "Since thou art God and King, therefore thou wast anointed, since none but thou couldst unite man to the Holy Ghost, thou the image of the Father, in which we were made in the beginning: for thine is even the Spirit."—*Athanasius.*

Verse 7.—"*Therefore God, thy God.*" God was the God of Christ in covenant, that he might be our God in covenant; for in his transactions, whole Christ, Head and members, are to be considered (Gal. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 12), the covenant being first transacted with the Head (who is given for a covenant to us, Isa. xlii. 6), and then with the members, with him in reference to us and for us. As God did not fail our surety, but supported him in his great conflict, when out of the depths he called unto him; so neither will he fail us in time of need. Heb. iv. 16; xiii. 5, 6.—*William Troughton.*

Verse 7.—"*Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;*" *i.e.*, enriched and filled thee in a singular and peculiar manner with the fulness of the Spirit, whereby thou art consecrated to thy office; and by reason whereof thou out-shinest and excellest all the saints who are thy "*fellows,*" or co-partners in these graces. So that in these words you have two parts, namely, first, *the saints' dignity;* and, secondly, *Christ's pre-eminency.* First. *The saints' dignity*, which consists in this, that they are Christ's "*fellows.*" The Hebrew word מֵחֲבֵרֶיךָ, is very full and copious, and is translated consorts, companions, co-partners, partakers; or, as ours reads it, "*fellows;*" *i.e.*, such as are partakers with him in the anointing of the Spirit, who do in their measure receive the same Spirit, every Christian being anointed, *modo sibi proportionato*, with the same grace and dignified with the same titles. 1 John ii. 27; Rev. i. 6. Christ and the saints are in common one with another. Doth the Spirit of holiness dwell in him? So he doth in them too. Is Christ King and Priest? Why, so are they, too, by the grace of union with him. He hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father. This is the saints' dignity, to be Christ's fellows, consorts, or co-partners; so that look whatever grace or excellency is in Christ, it is not impropriated to himself, but they do share with him; for indeed he was filled with the fulness of the Spirit for their sakes and use. As the sun is filled with light not to shine to itself, but to others, so is Christ with grace; and therefore some translate the text not *præ consortibus*, above thy fellows, but *propter consortes*, for thy fellows;* making Christ the first receptacle of all grace, who first and immediately is filled from the fountain of the Godhead, but it is for his people who receive and derive from him according to their proportion. This is a great truth; and the dignity of the saints lies chiefly in the partnership with Christ, though our translation, "*above thy fellows,*" suits best both with the importance of the word and scope of the place. Secondly. But then, whatever *dignity* is ascribed herein to the saints, there is, and still must be, a *pre-eminency* acknowledged and ascribed to Christ: if they are anointed with the spirit of grace, much more abundantly is Christ: "*God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*"—*John Flavel.*

Verse 7.—"*Oil of gladness.*" For sweet-smelling oils were also used to beautify the face upon occasions of feasting and mirth. Ps. xxiii. 5; civ. 15; Isai. lxi. 3. And likewise this oil of consecration and infusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost hath been the cause and foundation of Christ's human nature's obtaining of the everlasting joys and glory. Phil. ii. 9; Heb. xii. 2.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 7.—Behold, O ye Arians, and acknowledge even hence the truth. The psalmist speaks of us all as *fellows* or *partakers* of the Lord, but were he one of things which come out of nothing, and of things generate, he himself had been one of those who partake. But since he hymned him as the eternal God, saying, "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,*" and has declared that all other things partake of him, what conclusion must we draw, but that he is distinct from generated things, and he only the Father's veritable Word, Radiance, and Wisdom, which all things generate partake, being sanctified by him in Spirit? And, therefore, he is here "*anointed,*" not that he may become God, for he was so even before; nor that he may become king, for he had the kingdom

* Rivetus.

eternally, existing as God's image, as the sacred oracle shows; but in our behalf is this written, as before. For the Israelitish kings, upon their being anointed, then became kings, not being so before, as David, as Ezekias, as Josias, and the rest; but the Saviour, on the contrary, being God, and ever ruling in the Father's kingdom, and being himself the dispenser of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless is here said to be anointed, that, as before, being said as man to be anointed with the Spirit, he might provide for us more, not only exaltation and resurrection, but the indwelling and intimacy of the Spirit. . . . . And when he received the Spirit, we it was who, by him were made recipients of it. And, moreover, for this reason, not as Aaron, or David, or the rest, was he anointed with oil, but in another way, above all his fellows, "*with the oil of gladness*," which he himself interprets to be the Spirit, saying by the prophet, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me;" as also the apostle has said, "How God anointed him with the Holy Ghost."—*Athanasius.*

Verse 8.—"*All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*" Although there is considerable obscurity overhanging these words, still the general idea of *a supereminent fulness of anointing* is quite apparent, combined, however, with the other idea that the anointing oil or ointment is of *the most exquisite quality.* Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia were celebrated for their peculiar fragrance, on which account they were used in compounding the choicest unguents. Myrrh and cassia are mentioned in Exod. xxx. 23, 24, as two of the spices of which the holy anointing oil was made up. All its ingredients were considered sacred. The Israelites were forbidden to pour it upon man's flesh, or to attempt any imitation of it in their own perfumes. Ivory was in early times, as it still is, rare and costly, and it was highly esteemed as a material for household decoration, on which the finest workmanship and the most princely expenditure were displayed. In palaces of ivory, therefore, it was to be expected that, in correspondence with the magnificence of their structure and the costliness of their furniture, the ointment employed for anointing would be of the richest perfume, and in the greatest profusion. According to our version of the Psalm, the divine Saviour is thus represented as being anointed with oil of the very best kind, even oil taken from the ivory palaces; and also as receiving it in no ordinary measure. His anointing was not confined to a few ceremonial drops poured upon the head, but so abundant is it said to have been, that *all* his garments *smelled* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.

Bishop Horsley has proposed a change in the translation, by which means the idea of abundance is connected, not with the fragrance arising from the anointing, but with the anointing itself, which is a different and far more important thing. "Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia, excelling the palaces of ivory, excelling those which delight thee." This translation, which is strictly literal as well as poetical, is at the same time comparatively free from obscurity, and it visibly sets forth, under the most expressive imagery, the surpassing measure of that anointing which was conferred on our Lord above all his fellows. His garments are supposed not merely to have been all richly perfumed, or even thoroughly saturated with the oil of gladness, but to have consisted of the very articles which entered into the composition of the most precious and odoriferous unguent: "*Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia.*" This is figurative language, but nothing could more emphatically exhibit how truly "the Spirit rested on Jesus, and abode with him" in all the plenitude of his heavenly gifts. That heavenly anointing constituted, as it were, his very dress, "excelling" in the quantity or measure of the anointing "the palaces of ivory;" because their furnitures, however highly scented, were not made of aromatic materials. The strength of the perfumes would evaporate, the fragrance would soon diminish; but permanent as well as plentiful fragrance is secured to him whose "garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia." It is added, in the way

of parallelism, "excelling those which delight in thee," or those which make thee glad. To say that the persons here alluded to are the occupiers of the ivory palaces, might perhaps be objected to as fanciful; but palaces are the abodes of kings; and anointed kings, either literally, or typically, or spiritually, are the fellows of the Lord's Anointed One; and it does seem manifest that, as his anointing causes joy and gladness to all the parties concerned in it, so likewise there is an anointing of those who are honoured to be his fellows which causes joy and gladness to him. The persons who are in the one verse spoken of as giving delight to Christ, there is no reason to regard as any other than the persons spoken of in the former verse as his "*fellows.*" And if this is the case, then we have a comparison drawn betwixt the one and the other in the matter of their anointing, and to that of Christ a decided superiority is ascribed. *David Pitcairn, in "The Anointed Saviour,"* 1846.

Verse 8.—"*All thy garments smell of myrrh,*" etc. These things are true in Jesus; by his garments is meant his righteousness; for it is written, He clothed himself with righteousness and zeal. And here the translator hath put in "*smell,*" which rather should have been *are*, for "*his garments are* of myrrh, and aloes and cassia," that is, truly purging, cleansing, and making sound; for his righteousness, which is the righteousness of faith, maketh sound-hearted Christians; whereas, man's righteousness, which is the righteousness of works, maketh filthy hypocrites. And by "*ivory palaces,*" is meant the true faith and fear of God; for ivory is solid and white, and palaces are king's houses; and by Christ we are made kings, and our dwelling is in faith and fear of God; and this is the gladness and joy of our Lord Jesus, that he brings many sons and daughters unto God.—*Richard Coore,* 1683.

Verse 8.—"*Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*" Commentators have been more perplexed in explaining these words than any other part of the Psalm. Not to detain you with the various expositions that have been proposed, I will give you what I conceive to be the meaning of the passage. The word rendered "*whereby,*" is also the name of a region in Arabia Felix, namely, Minnæa, which, according to the geographer Strabo, "abounded in myrrh and frankincense." Now, it is singular that, according to the historian, Diodorus Siculus, "the inhabitants of Arabia Felix had sumptuous houses, adorned with *ivory* and precious stones." Putting these two things together, therefore, namely, that this region abounded in myrrh and frankincense, and that its inhabitants adorned their houses with ivory, we may, I conceive, find a clue to the psalmist's meaning. If we substitute "Minnæa" for "whereby," the passage will run thus—

> "Myrrh, aloes, and cassia, are all thy garments,
> From ivory palaces of Minnæa they have made thee glad."

You recollect in the verse just going before, the oil with which Christ was said to be anointed, is called the oil of "*gladness.*" Accordingly, he is here said to be made *glad* (it is the same word in both places in the Hebrew), by the spices of which that oil is composed. Those spices are said to have been brought out of the most spicy region of the land of spices, and it is implied that they are the best spices of that spicy region. "*Out of the ivory palaces,*" says the psalmist; not only houses, but palaces—the mansions of the great, where the best spices would naturally be kept—out of these have come the myrrh, aloes, and cassia, that have composed the oil of gladness whereby thou art made glad. God anointed Christ, when he set him on his everlasting throne, with the oil of gladness; and this anointing was so profuse, his garments were so overspread with it, that they seemed to be nothing but myrrh, aloes, and cassia. The spices, moreover, of which the anointing oil was composed, were the best of their kind, brought, as they were, from the ivory palaces of Minnæa. Such appears to be the psalmist's meaning; and when thus understood, the passage becomes most beautifully expressive of the *excellency* and *unmeasured supply* of the gifts and graces of that Spirit with which Christ was anointed by his Father.—*George Harpur.*

Verse 8.—"*The ivory palaces.*" "*The ivory courts.*" Probably so called from the great quantity of ivory used in ornamenting and inlaying them; as the emperor Nero's palace, mentioned by Suetonius, was named "aurea," or "golden," because "*lita auro*," "overlaid with gold." This method of ornamenting or inlaying rooms was very ancient among the Greeks. Homer in the fourth book of the Odyssey, seems to mention it, as employed in Menelaus's palace at Lacedæmon; and that the Romans sometimes ornamented their apartments in like manner, seems evident from Horace and Ovid. So in modern times, the winter apartment of the fair Fatima at Constantinople, has been described by an eye-witness as "wainscotted with inlaid work of mother-of-pearl, *ivory of different colours*, and olive wood." Ivory is likewise employed at Aleppo, as Dr. Russell informs us, in the decoration of some of the more expensive apartments.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 8.—"*Ivory palaces.*" Either edifices (1 Kings xxii. 39; Cant. vii. 14), or ivory coffers, and wardrobes, whence those garments were taken, and are kept.—*Westminster Assembly's Annotations.*

Verse 8.—"*Whereby they have made thee glad.*" The best sense of the phrase—*from which they rejoice thee*—is had by making *they* refer to the *king's daughters* mentioned in the next verse.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 8.—Gesenius and Delitzsch consider מִנִּי an abbreviated form of the plural מִנִּים (Ps. cv. 4), "strings," or "stringed instruments, and would render thus:—"*Thee glad out of the ivory palaces stringed instruments have made.*"—*Dalman Hapstone.* [With this rendering Ewald and Lange agree.—*J. L. K.*]

Verse 9.—"*Kings' daughters.*" Albeit the Catholic church consisting of true converts or real saints be but the one and only true spouse of Christ, yet particular visible churches consisting of saints by calling, by obligation, by profession, and common estimation, their own or others, are many. The true church consisting of true converts (whose praise is of God, to whom only they are certainly known, and not of men), being but one, is compared to the *queen;* but the particular, whose collections and consociations are known to men, being many, are compared to *ladies of honour* who serve the queen.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 9.—"*The queen.*" It is written of Matilda, the empress, that she was the daughter of a king, the mother of a king, and the wife of a king.

Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima prole,
Hic jacet Henrici filia, nupta, parens.

So David intimates in this hymn, that the church is the daughter of a King, at the 13th verse, "The king's daughter is all glorious within;" and the mother of a king, at the 16th verse, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth;" and the wife of a king, in this verse, "*Upon thy right hand did stand the queen*," as being (I speak in the language of Canaan), spiritually the wedded and bedded wife to the king of glory.—*John Boys.*

Verse 10.—"*Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*" Three *alls* I expect you to part with, saith Christ. 1. All your sinful lusts, all the ways of the old Adam, our Father's house. Ever since Adam's apostacy, God and man have parted houses. Ever since, our father's house is a house of ill manners, a house of sin and wickedness. 2. All your worldly advantages. "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." He that hath all these must be ready to part with all; they are joined not disjunctively but copulatively. 3. All self, self-will, self-righteousness, self-sufficiencies, self-confidences, and self-seekings.—*Lewis Stuckley.*

Verse 10.—"*Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*" If you see a bee leave a fair flower and stick upon another, you may conclude that she finds most honey-dew in that flower she most sticks upon: so here God's people

would never leave so many fair flowers in the world's garden, had they not some other in which they find most sweetness. Christ hath his garden, into which he brings his beloved, and there she finds other manner of flowers than any the world hath, in which there is sweetness of a higher nature, even the honey-dew of the choice mercy and goodness and blessing of God himself: if God's people do leave the full breasts of the world, it is because they have found the breasts of consolation from which they have sucked other manner of sweetness than the breast of the world can afford.—*Jeremiah Burroughs, in "Moses, his self-denyall."* 1649.

Verse 10.—"*Forget.*" If thou be on the mountain, have no love to look back to Sodom. If thou be in the ark, fly not back to the world, as the raven did. If thou be set on Canaan, forget the flesh-pots of Egypt. If marching against Midian, forget stooping to the waters of Harod. Judg. vii. If on the house-top, forget that is below thee. Mark xiii. 15. If thy hand be put to the plough, forget that is behind thee. Luke ix. 62. Themistocles desired rather to learn the art of forgetfulness than of memory. Philosophy is an art of remembering, divinity includes in it an art of forgetting. The first lesson that Socrates taught his scholars was, Remember; for he thought that knowledge was nothing else but a calling to remembrance of those things the mind knew ere it knew the body. But the first lesson that Christ teacheth his scholars is, *Forget:* "*Forget thine own people;*" "Repent" (Matt. iv. 17); first, "eschew evil," 1 Peter iii. 11.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 11.—"*So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.*" This is a most sweet promise. For the Holy Spirit knoweth that this monster, Monk, sticks fast in our heart—that we want to be pure and without spot before God. Thus, under Popery, all my temptation was this. I used to say, 'that I would willingly go to the sacrament if I were but worthy.' Thus we seek, naturally, a purity in ourselves; and we examine our whole life and want to find a purity in ourselves, that we might have no need of grace, but might be pronounced righteous upon the grounds of our own merit. . . . Thou wilt certainly never become righteous by thyself and thine own works. . . . The Holy Spirit saith, therefore, I will give thee wholesome counsel; and if thou wilt hear me, thou shalt become a virgin all fair. For, if thou wouldst be beautiful in the sight of God, so that all thy works should please him, and he should say, "Thy prayer pleaseth me; all that thou sayest, doest, and thinkest, pleaseth me!" proceed thou thus: "hear, see, and incline thine ear;" and thou shalt thus become all fair. When thou hast heard, hast seen, hast forgotten all thine own righteousness, all the law, all traditions, and all that monkery, and hast believed, then art thou fair; not in thine own beauty, but in the beauty of the King who has adorned thee with his Word; because he has brought unto thee thereby his righteousness, his holiness, truth, and fortitude, and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. . . . The Holy Spirit uses the most exalted language. "*So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty:*" that is, thou wilt by this faith prevail upon him to do whatever thou desirest: so that, as one urged by the power of love, he will spontaneously follow thee, abide with thee, and take up his abode with thee. For wherever God has given his Word, there he does not leave his work which he has begun in thee; but he brings upon thee first the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh; that by them he may work upon thee. These are his embraces whereby he embraceth his spouse through impatiency of love. . . . . The sum of the whole therefore, is this: That our beauty does not consist in our own virtues, nor even in the gifts which we have received from God, by which we put forth virtues, and do all those things which pertain unto the life of the law; but in this—our apprehending Christ and believing in him. Then it is that we are truly beautiful: and it is this beauty alone that Christ looks upon, and upon no other.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 11.—In this Psalm Christ is set forth in all his royalty and majesty; yet he is said "*greatly to desire or delight in the beauty*" of his queen, that is,

the graces of the saints ; and that not with an ordinary delight, but he "*greatly* desires ;" his desire is increased as her beauty is. For that is there brought in as a motive unto her to be more holy and conformed unto him, "to incline her ear, and forsake her father's house." "*So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.*" Christ hath a beauty that pleaseth him as well as we have, though of another kind ; and, therefore, ceaseth not till he hath got out every spot and wrinkle out of his spouse's face, as the apostle speaks (Eph. v. 27), "so as to present her glorious unto himself," that is, delightful and pleasing in his eye.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 12.—"*And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.*" The daughters of Tyre are the daughters of the Gentiles, the part standing for the whole. Tyre, a city bordering on this country where the prophecy was delivered, typified the nations that were to believe in Christ. Thence came that Canaanitish woman, who was at first called *a dog ;* for that ye may know that she was from thence, the gospel speaks thus (Matt. xv. 21—28), "Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts," with all the rest that is related there. She who at first, at the house of her "father," and among her "own people," was but *a dog,* who by coming to, and crying after that "King," was made beautiful by believing in him, what did she obtain to hear? "*O woman, great is thy faith.*" *The King has greatly desired thy beauty.—Augustine.*

Verse 12.—"*With a gift.*" Those who sold their property, came with presents to entreat the face of this "queen," and "laid what they brought at the apostles' feet." Warm then was love in the church.—*Augustine.*

Verse 12.—"*The rich.*" They are, indeed, rich in grace, whose graces are not hindered by riches, whose souls prosper when their bodies prosper, as the apostle John speaks in his third Epistle ; or, who, as 'tis prophesied in this verse, being full of worldly blessings, are yet hungry and eager in their pursuit after Christ. "*The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift ; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour,*" saith the psalmist ; that is, either the favour of Christ himself, or the favour of the church, by reason of that spiritual excellence and inward glory which she hath received from Christ. Now, to see the rich bring their gifts, and, which is the thing chiefly aimed at here, giving up themselves to Christ, this is a rare sight, and a remarkable work of grace.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 13.—"*The king's daughter is all glorious within,*" etc. When the children of God recollect their glorious and heavenly pedigree, they endeavour to excel others, both in the beautiful disposition of soul and manner of life. "*The king's daughter,*" that is, the daughter of the heavenly Father, who is also the bride of the king's Son ; every believing soul "*is all glorious,*" adorned with a holiness not only glorious to herself, but also to the Father and the Bridegroom, and is the beginning of a heavenly glory ; and that chiefly "*within,*" not only when she appears abroad, and presents herself to the view of men, but also when she sits in the inner bed-chamber in the secret exercises of religion, in which she in private pleases the Father and the Bridegroom, who having a regard to the inward man, she above all endeavours to keep that pure and chaste. Her clothing is of "*gold ;*" in comparison of which whatever excellency natural men were even possessed of, is but a shining vanity ; nay, it was "*wrought*" gold, curiously beautified with various resemblances, which represents the perfections of God himself ; and of different colours, on account of the different yet harmoniously corresponding graces of the Holy Spirit ; or of needlework of the Phrygian embroiderers, or rather the work of the cunning workman, mentioned in Cant. vii. 1. Nor is the spouse only beautiful within, but also without ; "holding forth the word of life," Phil. ii. 16, she practises charity, glorifies Christ, edifies her neighbour, and in this manner she is brought unto the king, worthy to be presented to him. This is the only way by

which we are to endeavour to obtain familiarity with him, and the sweetest intercourse of the chastest love, both on earth and in heaven.—*Hermann Witsius*, 1636—1708.

Verse 13. —"*The king's daughter is all glorious within.*" The meaning is, either, (1.) that her chief glory consisted in this, that she was admitted to such a familiar privacy with the king; or, (2.) that when she sat in the inmost rooms of the king's palace, she was there in her greatest glory, because those rooms were most gorgeously set forth with all kinds of bravery and glorious furniture; or, (3.) that she used to be gloriously attired, not only when she went abroad in public, but also when she stayed within, as being indeed adorned (which may be implied) only for the delight of the king, and not that others might gaze upon her; or, (4.)—which I like best—that the inward virtues and endowments of her mind were her greatest ornament and glory.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 13.—"*All glorious within.*" Saints must shine by the comeliness of Christ, as a gracious husband labours to change his spouse into his own image and likeness by kindnesses, precepts, and example, that he may take the more delight in her person; so does our spiritual Solomon change the hue of his Egyptian queen to deem of things and persons as her Lord and husband judges, and frames her spirit to delight in doing his will and pleasure, and take the highest solace in obedience, to enjoy a heavenly freedom, mixed with amiable and joyful reverence. He roots out of her heart all changeable affections and worldly fancies, and hankering longings after the fond fashions of Shechem, and all carnal inclinations to the daughters of Canaan's lineage, and all the beggarly humours of the besotted world, and to pass by with a holy scorn all the pitiful pageantry of this perishing and fading life, and rise to a mean estimate of the baubles and trifles that enchant a carnal heart. At length she arrives to a noble and generous judgment, counting all but dung and dross that she may win Christ. As her prince of life was crucified by the world for her redemption, so she begins to be crucified to it in token of conformity to him, and at length becomes "*all glorious within.*"—*Samuel Lee, in* "*The Triumph of Mercy*," 1676.

Verse 13.—"*Within.*" The ark was pitched within with the same pitch with which it was pitched without withal; such is the sincere man, within and without alike, inside and outside, all one. Yea, he is rather better than he shows, as the "*king's daughter,*" whose *outside* might sometimes be *sackcloth*, yet was "*all glorious within, and her inward garments of wrought gold.*" Or as the temple, outwardly nothing but wood and stone to be seen, inwardly all rich and beautiful, especially the *sanctum sanctorum* (when the veil was drawn) was all gold. The very floor, as well as the roof, was overlaid with gold. 1 Kings vi. 30.—*John Sheffield.*

Verse 13.—"*Her clothing is of wrought gold.*" Some read it *purled* works, or closures of *gold, enamelled* gold, such as precious *stones* were set in, which were exceeding *splendid* and glorious; such were the *clothes* of service in the tabernacle, and the garments and robes of the *high priest*, which shadowed forth Christ's *righteousness.* Exod. xxviii. 11—14; Exod. xxxix. 1—6.—*William Troughton.*

Verse 13.—About this time, Father La Combe was called to preach on some public occasion. The new doctrine, as it was termed, was not altogether a secret. Public curiosity had become excited. He chose for his text the passage in Psalm xlv. 13, "*The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.*" By the king he understood *Christ;* by the king's daughter, *the church.* His doctrine was, whatever might be true in regard to men's original depravity, that those who are truly given to Christ, and are in full harmony with him, are delivered from it: that is to say, are "*all glorious within.*" Like Christ, they love God with a love free from selfishness, with *pure* love. Like Christ, they are come to do the will of the Father. Christ is formed in them. They not only have faith in Christ, and faith in God through Christ, but, as the result of this faith, they have Christ's disposition. They are now in a situation to say of themselves individually, in the language of the

apostle Paul, "I live, and yet not I, *but Christ liveth in me.*" He did not maintain that all Christians are necessarily the subjects of this advanced state of Christian experience, but endeavoured to show that this is a *possible* state; that, however intense human depravity may be, the grace of God has power to overcome it; that the example of Christ, the full and rich promises, and even the commands, give encouragement to effort, and confidence in ultimate victory.—*From the "Life, Religious Opinions and Experiences of Madame de la Mothe Guyon."*

Verse 14.—"*The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee.*" The highest and most excellent Christian cannot say, *I* have no *need* of thee: the queen will not be without any of her true *companions.* As it is in the body *natural*, so it is in the church of Christ, or body *mystical;* all the members being fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh *increase* of the body to the edifying of itself in *love.* Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19.—*William Troughton.*

Verse 14.—"*The virgins her companions that follow her.*" These are members of the church, but the figure of a bridal train is employed to sustain the allegory. What a bright train the Royal Bride will have as she goes forth to meet the Bridegroom! Kings' daughters will be there, for every crowned head on earth shall one day bow at the foot of the cross. The daughter of Tyre shall be there—Tyre, the ancient emporium of the nations—to show that the merchandise of the world shall be holiness to the Lord. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Jews and Gentiles will be there—representatives from all peoples, and tongues, and nations. They are "*virgins.*" They keep themselves unspotted from the world. They are weaned from its idols; they dread its contaminations. Their first care it to preserve the whiteness of their souls by daily washing in the blood of the Lamb. . . . . They "*follow*" the royal Bride. They keep by her side in storm and sunshine. They follow her in the regeneration. They follow her in the search after her Beloved. Song iii. 2, 3. They follow her to the green pastures and the still waters. They follow her without the camp bearing his reproach. Like Ruth, they leave father and mother to follow her. Ruth i. 16. Like Caleb, they follow the Lord fully. When a crisis comes, and the question, "Who is on the Lord's side?" involves heavy issues, and hollow-hearted professors fly away like swallows before the storm, they follow her. When persecution comes, and Christ's faithful witnesses have to prophesy clothed in sackcloth, and perhaps to pass through a baptism of blood to the crown, they follow her: like Peden, when—the bloodhounds of persecution in full chase after him, and the lone moor his home—he thought of Richard Cameron gone to glory, and sighed, "Oh, to be with Richie!"—*Duncan Macgregor, M.A., in "The Shepherd of Israel; or, Illustrations of the Inner Life,"* 1869.

Verse 15.—"*With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought.*" No marriage was ever consummated with that triumphal solemnity as the marriage of Christ and believers shall be in heaven. Among the Jews the marriage house was called *bethillulah*—the house of praise; there was joy on all hands, but not like the joy that will be in heaven when believers, the spouse of Christ, shall be brought thither. *God the Father* will rejoice to behold the blessed accomplishment and consummation of that glorious design and project of his love. *Jesus Christ the Bridegroom* will rejoice to see the travail of his soul, the blessed birth and issue of all his bitter pangs and agonies. Isaiah liii. 11. *The Holy Spirit* will rejoice to see the complement and perfection of that sanctifying design which was committed to his hand (2 Cor. v. 5); to see those souls, whom he once found as rough stones, now to shine as the bright polished stones of the spiritual temple. *Angels* will rejoice; great was the joy when the foundation of this design was laid, in the incarnation of Christ (Luke ii. 13);

great, therefore, must their joy be when the topstone is set up with shouting, crying, Grace, grace. *The saints* themselves shall rejoice unspeakably, when they shall enter into the king's palace, and be for ever with the Lord. 1 Thess. iv. 17. Indeed, there will be joy on all hands, except among the devils and damned, who shall gnash their teeth with envy, at the everlasting advancement and glory of believers.—*John Flavel.*

Verse 15.—"*They shall be brought.*" Reader! do not fail to observe the manner of expression, the church is *brought*, she doth not *come* of herself. No, she must be convinced, converted, made willing. No one can come to Christ, except the Father, who hath sent Christ, draw him. John vi. 44.—*Robert Hawker, D.D.*

Verse 15.—"*They shall enter into the king's palace.*" There are two rich palaces mentioned in this Psalm: the one an ivory palace (verse 8), whereby is signified the assemblies of the saints, and ordinances of divine worship, in which the Lord manifests himself graciously. Here the presence of the Lord is sweet and amiable. Cant. i. 8; Psalm lxxxiv. 2. The other "palace" is mentioned in this fifteenth verse, and it is a palace of glory, a palace more bright and splendid than the finest gold glorious mansions. John xiv. 2.—*William Troughton.*

Verse 16.—"*Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.*" O church of God, think not thyself abandoned then, because thou seest not Peter, nor seest Paul—seest not those through whom thou wast born. Out of thine own offspring has a body of "fathers" been raised up to thee.—*Augustine.*

Verse 16.—"*Thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*" The new connexion is glorious to the King. Many were his glorious and royal ancestors down to Jesse, but now there are born to him, the Eternal King, sons as the dew from the womb of the morning (Ps. cx. 3), who shall, as princes, occupy the thrones of the world. So our Lord promised to his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. xix. 28. And Paul says, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" 1 Cor. vi. 2.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 16.—"*Princes in all the earth.*" Others are but princes in their own dominion, but he will make you princes in all lands. . . . Such a kingdom you shall have, if you will come in to Christ, you shall have the liberty of kings, the abundance and plenty of kings, the power of kings, the victory of kings, and the glory of kings.—*John Preston.*

Verse 17.—"*Therefore shall the people praise thee.*" Christ's espousing unto himself a church, and gathering more and more from age to age by his word and Spirit unto it, his converting souls and bringing them into the fellowship of his family, and giving unto them princely minds and affections, wherever they live, is a large matter of growing and everlasting glory unto his majesty; for in regard of this point, and what is said before in this Psalm, he addeth as the close of all, "*Therefore shall the people praise thee.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 17.—In the Hebrew text, which is here quoted, there is a particle added to the word *ever*, which in that case intendeth a proper everlastingness, without any period or end at all, and thereupon translated "*for ever and ever.*"—*William Gouge, D.D.*, on Hebrews i. 8.

Verse 17. (*last clause*) :—

"When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awaking cries;
May Jesus Christ be praised.
* * * *
When sleep her balm denies,
My silent spirit sighs;
May Jesus Christ be praised.
* * * *

In heaven's eternal bliss,
The loveliest strain is this;
May Jesus Christ be praised.
* * * *
To God the Word on high,
The hosts of angels cry;
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Let mortals, too, upraise
Their voice in hymns of praise;
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Let earth's wide circle round,
In joyful notes resound;
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Let air, and sea, and sky,
From depth to height reply;
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Be this while life is mine,
My canticle divine;
May Jesus Christ be praised.

Be this the eternal song
Through all the ages on;
May Jesus Christ be praised."

Translated by Edward Caswall, in "Poems," 1861.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—In the preface, the prophet commends the subject he is to treat of, signifying, 1. That it is *a good matter—good*, as speaking of the Son of God, who is the *chief good*. 2. *Good for us;* for upon the marriage of Christ to his church depends our good.—*Bishop Nicholson.*

Verse 1.—Character read by heart-writing. I. The true lover of Christ is sincere—"*my heart*"? II. He is a man of emotion. III. A man of holy meditation. IV. A man of experience—"*things I have made.*" V. A man who bears witness for his Lord.

Verse 1.—Three things requisite for Christian teaching: I. That the matter be good; and concerning the best of all subjects, "*touching the King.*" II. That the language be fluent like the pen, etc. 1. Partly from nature. 2. Partly from cultivation. 3. Partly from the Spirit of God. III. That the heart be absorbed in it—"*My heart is inditing.*"—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—In what respects Jesus is fairer than the best of men.

Verse 2.—Jesus—his person, his gospel, his fulness of blessing.

Verse 2.—I. We may and ought to praise Christ. Angels do, God does, Scripture does, Old Testament saints and New, so should we. It is the work of heaven begun on earth. II. For what should we praise him? 1. For his beauty. Is wisdom beauty? Is righteousness? Is love? Is meekness? All are found in him supremely—

"All human beauties, all divine,
In our Redeemer meet and shine."

2. For his grace. Grace of God treasured up in him. 3. For his blessedness—of God and for ever.—*G. R.*

Verses 2—5.—In these verses the Lord Jesus is presented, I. As most amiable in himself. II. As the great favourite of heaven. III. As victorious over his enemies.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 3.—The captain's presence desired by the soldier. It is our honour, our delight, our safety, our strength, our victory, our reward.

Verse 3—5.—Messiah's victory predicted and desired.—*E. Payson's Sermon.*

Verse 5.—Arrows of judicial wrath are sharp. II. Arrows of providential goodness are sharper still. III. Arrows of subduing grace are sharpest of all. The quiver of the Almighty is full of these arrows.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—Arrows—what they are; whose they are; whom they strike; where they strike; what they do, and what follows.

Verse 6.—The God, the king, his throne, its duration, his sceptre. Let us worship, obey, trust, acquiesce, rejoice.

Verses 6, 7.—Empire, Eternity, Equity, Establishment, Exultation.

Verse 7.—"*Thou hatest wickedness.*" He hated it when it assailed him in his temptation, hated it in others, denounced it, died to slay it, will come to condemn it.

Verse 7.—Christ's love and hate.

Verse 8.—Christ's garments—his offices, his two natures, his ordinances, his honours, all are full of fragrance.

Verse 8.—"*Whereby they have made thee glad.*" We make Jesus glad by our love, our praise, our service, our gifts, our holiness, our fellowship with him.

Verse 8.—I. The odour of his garments, not of blood and battle, but of sweet perfume. II. The splendour of his palaces—ivory for rareness, purity, durability, etc. III. The source of his delight. 1. Himself, the sweet odour of his own graces. 2. His people, the savour of those who are saved. 3. His enemies, "even in them that perish." 4. All holy happy creatures who unite to make him glad.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—"Christ the best husband: or, an earnest invitation to young women to come and see Christ."—*George Whitefield's* "*Sermon, Preached to a Society of Young Women, in Fetter Lane.*"

Verses 9, 10.—I. The connections of the Bridegroom are to be remembered, those of the Bride to be forgotten.

Verse 11.—"*So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.*" Christ delighting in the Beauty of the Righteous.—*Martin Luther.* [*Select Works, by H. Cole.* I. 281.]

Verses 13—15.—I. The Bride's *new name*—"The king's daughter." She is the king's daughter for two reasons. 1. She is *born* of God; and 2. She is *espoused* to the Son of God. II. The Bride's *character*—"All glorious within." 1. Because *Christ reigns on the throne of her heart.* 2. Because *she is the temple of the Holy Ghost.* III. The Bride's *raiment*—"wrought gold," "needlework:" this is the *righteousness of Christ*; in other words, 1. His *perfect obedience.* 2. His *atoning death.* IV. The Bride's *companion*—"Virgins that follow her." V. The Bride's *home-going*—"She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework. . . . . With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace." 1. *She shall see the king in his beauty.* 2. *There will be an open declaration of his love to her before all worlds.—Duncan Macgregor, M.A.*

Verse 14.—I. The presentation of the church to Christ. 1. When souls are first brought to him—"I have espoused you as," etc. 2. When they come before him at death. 3. When the perfected church is presented to him—"That he might present it," etc. II. The manner of presentation—1. "in raiment," etc., such as he himself wrought out. 2. With all her followers. (1.) Their purity—"virgins." (2.) Their fellowship—"companions." (3.) Their succession—"that follow thee," from one age to another until they are complete.—*G. R.*

Verse 17.—I. Christ is the Father's delight. "*I* will make," etc. II. He is the church's theme—his name shall be remembered; and III. He is heaven's glory, "Shall praise thee," etc.—*G. R.*

WORKS UPON THE FORTY-FIFTH PSALM.

Exposition of Psalm XLV., in the works of JOHN BOYS, Dean of Canterbury. 1638. Folio edition, pp. 920—931.

The Mystery of the Marriage Song, and Mutual Spiritual Embraces between Christ and his Spouse, opened in an Exposition with practical notes and observations on the whole Forty-fifth Psalm. By W. TROUGHTON, Minister of the Gospel. 1656.

In "*Christ set forth in all types, figures, and obscure places of the Scripture, by* RICHARD COORE, 1683," there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

A Treatise of Salomon's Mariage; or, a Congratulation for the happie and hopefull Mariage betweene the most illustrious and Noble Prince, Frederike the V. Count Palatine of Rhine . . . . and the most gratious and excellent Princesse, the Lady Elizabeth, sole daughter unto the high and mighty Prince James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. Joyfully solemnized on the 14th day of February, 1612. . . . . [On verses 10—16. By ANDREW WILLET.]

The Bride Royall; or, the Spirituall Marriage betweene Christ and his Church. Delivered by way of congratulation upon the happy and hopefull marriage betweene the two incomparable Princes, the Palsegrave, and the Ladie Elizabeth. In a sermon. . . . . By G[EORGE] W[EBBE]. 1613. . . . . [On verses 13, 14, 15.]

Psalm XLV. applied to Messiah's First Advent, and Psalm XLV. applied to Messiah's Second Advent, in pp. 242—341, of *The Anointed Saviour set forth as the Principal Object of Saving Faith.* By the Rev. DAVID PITCAIRN. 1846.

Five Discourses on *Christ in the Psalms.* An Exposition of the second, forty-fifth and hundred-and-tenth Psalms. In a series of Discourses. By the Rev. GEORGE HARPUR, B.A. London: Wertheim, Macintosh, and Hunt. 1862.

PSALM XLVI.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician. *He who could sing othe. Psalms so well was fitly entrusted with this noble ode. Trifles may be left to commoner songsters, but the most skilful musician in Israel must be charged with the due performance of this song, with the most harmonious voices and choicest music.* For the Sons of Korah. *One alone cannot fulfil the praise, there must be picked choristers under him, whose joyful privilege it shall be to celebrate the service of song in the house of the Lord. As to why the Sons of Korah were selected, see our remarks at the head of Psalm XLII. It may be well to add that they were a division of the Levites who took their turn in serving at the temple. All the works of holy service ought not to be monopolised by one order of talent, each company of believers should in due course enjoy the privilege. None ought to be without a share in the service of God.*

A Song upon Alamoth. *Which may denote that the music was to be pitched high for the treble or soprano voices of the Hebrew virgins. They went forth in their dances to sing the praises of David when he smote the Philistine, it was meet that they should make merry and be glad when the victories of Jehovah became their theme. We need to praise God upon virgin hearts, with souls chaste towards his fear, with lively and exalted expressions, and gladsome strains. Or the word Alamoth may refer to shrill-sounding instruments, as in* 1 Chron. xv. 20, *where we read that Zechariah, and Eliab, and Benaiah were to praise the Lord "with psalteries on Alamoth." We are not always, in a slovenly manner, to fall into one key, but with intelligence are to modulate our praises and make them fittingly expressive of the occasion and the joy it creates in our souls. These old musical terms cannot be interpreted with certainty, but they are still useful because they show that care and skill should be used in our sacred music.*

SUBJECT.—*Happen what may, the Lord's people are happy and secure, this is the doctrine of the Psalm, and it might, to help our memories, be called* THE SONG OF HOLY CONFIDENCE, *were it not that from the great reformer's love to this soul-stirring hymn it will probably be best remembered as* LUTHER'S PSALM.

DIVISION.—*It is divided by inspired authority into three parts, each of which ends with Selah.*

EXPOSITION.

GOD *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
3 *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the
mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

1. "*God is our refuge and strength.*" Not our armies, or our fortresses. Israel's boast is in Jehovah, the only living and true God. Others vaunt their impregnable castles, placed on inaccessible rocks, and secured with gates of iron, but God is a far better refuge from distress than all these: and when the time comes to carry the war into the enemy's territories, the Lord stands his people in better stead than all the valour of legions or the boasted strength of chariot and horse. Soldiers of the cross, remember this, and count yourselves safe, and make yourselves strong in God. Forget not the personal possessive word "*our*;" make sure each one of your portion in God, that you may say, "He is *my* refuge and strength." Neither forget the fact that God is our refuge just now, in the immediate present, as truly as when David penned the word. God alone is our all in all. All other refuges are refuges of lies, all other strength is weakness, for power belongeth unto God: but as God is all-sufficient, our defence and

might are equal to all emergencies. "*A very present help in trouble,*" or *in distresses he has so been found*, he has been tried and proved by his people. He never withdraws himself from his afflicted. He is their help, truly, effectually, constantly; he is present or near them, close at their side and ready for their succour, and this is emphasized by the word "*very*" in our version, he is more present than friend or relative can be, yea, more nearly present than even the trouble itself. To all this comfortable truth is added the consideration that his assistance comes at the needed time. He is not as the swallows that leave us in the winter; he is a friend in need and a friend indeed. When it is very dark with us, let brave spirits say, "Come, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm."

"A fortress firm, and steadfast rock,
Is God in time of danger;
A shield and sword in every shock,
From foe well-known or stranger."

2. "*Therefore.*" How fond the psalmist is of therefores! his poetry is no poetic rapture without reason, it is as logical as a mathematical demonstration. The next words are a necessary inference from these. "*Will not we fear.*" With God on our side, how irrational would fear be! Where he is all power is, and all love, why therefore should we quail? "*Though the earth be removed,*" though the basis of all visible things should be so convulsed as to be entirely changed. "*And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*" though the firmest of created objects should fall to headlong ruin, and be submerged in utter destruction. The two phrases set forth the most terrible commotions within the range of imagination, and include the overthrow of dynasties, the destruction of nations, the ruin of families, the persecutions of the church, the reign of heresy, and whatever else may at any time try the faith of believers. Let the worst come to the worst, the child of God should never give way to mistrust; since God remaineth faithful there can be no danger to his cause or people. When the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens and the earth shall pass away in the last general conflagration, we shall serenely behold "the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds," for even then our refuge shall preserve us from all evil, our strength shall prepare us for all good.

3. "*Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled.*" When all things are excited to fury, and reveal their utmost power to disturb, faith smiles serenely. She is not afraid of noise, nor even of real force, she knows that the Lord stilleth the raging of the sea, and holdeth the waves in the hollow of his hand. "*Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.*" Alps and Andes may tremble, but faith rests on a firmer basis, and is not to be moved by swelling seas. Evil may ferment, wrath may boil, and pride may foam, but the brave heart of holy confidence trembles not. Great men who are like mountains may quake for fear in times of great calamity, but the man whose trust is in God needs never be dismayed.

"*Selah.*" In the midst of such a hurly-burly the music may well come to a pause, both to give the singers breath, and ourselves time for meditation. We are in no hurry, but can sit us down and wait while earth dissolves, and mountains rock, and oceans roar. Ours is not the headlong rashness which passes for courage, we can calmly confront the danger, and meditate upon terror, dwelling on its separate items and united forces. The pause is not an exclamation of dismay, but merely a rest in music; we do not suspend our song in alarm, but retune our harps with deliberation amidst the tumult of the storm. It were well if all of us could say, "*Selah,*" under tempestuous trials, but alas! too often we speak in our haste, lay our trembling hands bewildered among the strings, strike the lyre with a rude crash, and mar the melody of our life-song.

4 *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the Most High.

5 God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

4. "*There is a river.*" Divine grace like a smoothly flowing, fertilising, full, and never-failing river, yields refreshment and consolation to believers. This is the river of the water of life, of which the church above as well as the church below partakes evermore. It is no boisterous ocean, but a placid stream, it is not stayed in its course by earthquakes or crumbling mountains, it follows its serene course without disturbance. Happy are they who know from their own experience that there is such a river of God. "*The streams whereof*" in their various influences, for they are many, "*shall make glad the city of God,*" by assuring the citizens that Zion's Lord will unfailingly supply all their needs. The streams are not transient like Cherith, nor muddy like the Nile, nor furious like Kishon, nor treacherous like Job's deceitful brooks, neither are their waters "naught" like those of Jericho, they are clear, cool, fresh, abundant, and gladdening. The great fear of an Eastern city in time of war was lest the water supply should be cut off during a siege; if that were secured the city could hold out against attacks for an indefinite period. In this verse, Jerusalem, which represents the church of God, is described as well supplied with water, to set forth the fact, that in seasons of trial all-sufficient grace will be given to enable us to endure unto the end. The church is like a well-ordered city, surrounded with mighty walls of truth and justice, garrisoned by omnipotence, fairly built and adorned by infinite wisdom: its burgesses the saints enjoy high privileges; they trade with far-off lands, they live in the smile of the King; and as a great river is the very making and mainstay of a town, so is the broad river of everlasting love and grace their joy and bliss. The church is peculiarly the "*City of God,*" of his designing, building, election, purchasing and indwelling. It is dedicated to his praise, and glorified by his presence. "*The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.*" This was the peculiar glory of Jerusalem, that the Lord within her walls had a place where he peculiarly revealed himself, and this is the choice privilege of the saints, concerning which we may cry with wonder, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" To be a temple for the Holy Ghost is the delightful portion of each saint, to be the living temple for the Lord our God is also the high honour of the church in her corporate capacity. Our God is here called by a worthy title, indicating his power, majesty, sublimity, and excellency; and it is worthy of note that under this character he dwells in the church. We have not a great God in nature, and a little God in grace; no, the church contains as clear and convincing a revelation of God as the works of nature, and even more amazing in the excellent glory which shines between the cherubim overshadowing that mercy seat which is the centre and gathering place of the people of the living God. To have the Most High dwelling within her members, is to make the church on earth like the church in heaven.

5. "*God is in the midst of her.*" His help is therefore sure and near. Is she besieged, then he is himself besieged within her, and we may be certain that he will break forth upon his adversaries. How near is the Lord to the distresses of his saints, since he sojourns in their midst! Let us take heed that we do not grieve him; let us have such respect to him as Moses had when he felt the sand of Horeb's desert to be holy, and put off his shoes from off his feet when the Lord spake from the burning bush. "*She shall not be moved.*" How can she be moved unless her enemies move her Lord also? His presence renders all hope of capturing and demolishing

the city utterly ridiculous The Lord is in the vessel, and she cannot, therefore, be wrecked. "*God shall help her.*" Within her he will furnish rich supplies, and outside her walls he will lay her foes in heaps like the armies of Sennacherib, when the angel went forth and smote them. "*And that right early.*" As soon as the first ray of light proclaims the coming day, at the turning of the morning God's right arm shall be outstretched for his people. The Lord is up betimes. We are slow to meet him, but he is never tardy in helping us. Impatience complains of divine delays, but in very deed the Lord is not slack concerning his promise. Man's haste is often folly, but God's apparent delays are ever wise; and, when rightly viewed, are no delays at all. To-day the bands of evil may environ the church of God, and threaten her with destruction; but ere long they shall pass away like the foam on the waters, and the noise of their tumult shall be silent in the grave. The darkest hour of the night is just before the turning of the morning; and then, even then, shall the Lord appear as the great ally of his church.

6. "*The heathen raged.*" The nations were in a furious uproar, they gathered against the city of the Lord like wolves ravenous for their prey; they foamed, and roared, and swelled like a tempestuous sea. "*The kingdoms were moved.*" A general confusion seized upon society; the fierce invaders convulsed their own dominions by draining the population to urge on the war, and they desolated other territories by their devastating march to Jerusalem. Crowns fell from royal heads, ancient thrones rocked like trees driven of the tempest, powerful empires fell like pines uprooted by the blast: everything was in disorder, and dismay seized on all who knew not the Lord. "*He uttered his voice, the earth melted.*" With no other instrumentality than a word the Lord ruled the storm. He gave forth a voice and stout hearts were dissolved, proud armies were annihilated, conquering powers were enfeebled. At first the confusion appeared to be worse confounded, when the element of divine power came into view; the very earth seemed turned to wax, the most solid and substantial of human things melted like the fat of rams upon the altar; but anon peace followed, the rage of man subsided, hearts capable of repentance relented, and the implacable were silenced. How mighty is a word from God! How mighty the Incarnate Word. O that such a word would come from the excellent glory even now to melt all hearts in love to Jesus, and to end for ever all the persecutions, wars, and rebellions of men!

7. "*The Lord of hosts is with us.*" This is the reason for all Zion's security, and for the overthrow of her foes. The Lord rules the angels, the stars, the elements, and all the hosts of heaven; and the heaven of heavens are under his sway. The armies of men though they know it not are made to subserve his will. This Generalissimo of the forces of the land, and the Lord High Admiral of the seas, is on our side—our august ally; woe unto those who fight against him, for they shall fly like smoke before the wind when he gives the word to scatter them. "*The God of Jacob is our refuge.*" Immanuel is Jehovah of Hosts, and Jacob's God is our high place of defence. When this glad verse is sung to music worthy of such a jubilate, well may the singers pause and the players wait awhile to retune their instruments; here, therefore, fitly stands that solemn, stately, peaceful note of rest, SELAH.

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

8. "*Come, behold the works of the Lord.*" The joyful citizens of Jerusalem are invited to go forth and view the remains of their enemies, that they may mark the prowess of Jehovah and the spoil which his right hand hath won for his people. It were well if we also carefully noted the providential dealings of our covenant God, and were quick to perceive his hand in the battles of his church. Whenever we read history it should be with this verse sounding in our ears. We should read the newspaper in the same spirit, to see how the Head of the Church rules the nations for his people's good, as Joseph governed Egypt for the sake of Israel. "*What desolations he hath made in the earth.*" The destroyers he destroys, the desolators he desolates. How forcible is the verse at this date! The ruined cities of Assyria, Babylon, Petra, Bashan, Canaan, are our instructors, and in tables of stone record the doings of the Lord. In every place where his cause and crown have been disregarded ruin has surely followed: sin has been a blight on nations, and left their palaces to lie in heaps. In the days of the writer of this Psalm, there had probably occurred some memorable interposition of God against his Israel's foes; and as he saw their overthrow, he called on his fellow citizens to come forth and attentively consider the terrible things in righteousness which had been wrought on their behalf. Dismantled castles and ruined abbeys in our own land stand as memorials of the Lord's victories over oppression and superstition. May there soon be more of such desolations.

> "Ye gloomy piles, ye tombs of living men,
> Ye sepulchres of womanhood, or worse;
> Ye refuges of lies, soon may ye fall,
> And 'mid your ruins may the owl, and bat,
> And dragon find congenial resting place."

9. "*He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth.*" His voice quiets the tumult of war, and calls for the silence of peace. However remote and barbarous the tribe, he awes the people into rest. He crushes the great powers till they cannot provoke strife again; he gives his people profound repose. "*He breaketh the bow,*" the sender of swift-winged death he renders useless. "*And cutteth the spear in sunder*"—the lance of the mighty man he shivers. "*He burneth the chariot in the fire*"—the proud war-chariot with its death-dealing scythes he commits to the flames. All sorts of weapons he piles heaps on heaps, and utterly destroys them. So was it in Judea in the days of yore, so shall it be in all lands in eras yet to come. Blessed deed of the Prince of Peace! when shall it be literally performed? Already the spiritual foes of his people are despoiled of their power to destroy; but when shall the universal victory of peace be celebrated, and instruments of wholesale murder be consigned to ignominious destruction? How glorious will the ultimate victory of Jesus be in the day of his appearing, when every enemy shall lick the dust!

10. "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" Hold off your hands, ye enemies! Sit down and wait in patience, ye believers! Acknowledge that Jehovah is God, ye who feel the terrors of his wrath! Adore him, and him only, ye who partake in the protections of his grace. Since none can worthily proclaim his nature, let "expressive silence muse his praise." The boasts of the ungodly and the timorous forebodings of the saints should certainly be hushed by a sight of what the Lord has done in past ages. "*I will be exalted among the heathen.*" They forget God, they worship idols, but Jehovah will yet be honoured by them. Reader, the prospects of missions are bright, bright as the promises of God. Let no man's heart fail him; the solemn declarations of this verse must be fulfilled. "*I will be exalted in the earth,*" among all people, whatever may have been their wickedness or their degradation. Either by terror or love God will subdue all hearts to himself. The whole round earth shall yet reflect the light of his majesty. All the more because of the sin, and obstinacy, and pride of man shall God be glorified when grace reigns unto eternal life in all corners of the world.

11. "*The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*" It was

meet to sing this twice over. It is a truth of which no believer wearies, it is a fact too often forgotten, it is a precious privilege which cannot be too often considered. Reader, is the Lord on thy side? Is Emmanuel, God with us, thy Redeemer? Is there a covenant between thee and God as between God and Jacob? If so, thrice happy art thou. Show thy joy in holy song, and in times of trouble play the man by still making music for thy God.

SELAH. Here as before, lift up the heart. Rest in contemplation after praise. Still keep the soul in tune. It is easier to sing a hymn of praise than to continue in the spirit of praise, but let it be our aim to maintain the uprising devotion of our grateful hearts, and so end our song as if we intended it to be continued.

SELAH bids the music rest,
Pause in silence soft and blest;
SELAH bids uplift the strain,
Harps and voices tune again;
SELAH ends the vocal praise,
Still your hearts to God upraise.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—The LXX referring to the notion of the theme צָלַם, *occultavit*, render it *ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων, for the hidden;* and the Latin, *pro arcanis;* and the rest of the ancient interpreters take the same course; the Chaldee referring it to *Coreh*, and those that were *hidden, i.e., swallowed up*, by the earth with him, whilst these *sons of Coreh* escaped; as if the mention of the *sons of Coreh* in the title, by whom this song was to be sung, referred the whole Psalm to that story. Accordingly, verse 2, when the Hebrew reads, "*Though the earth be removed,*" the paraphrase is, "*When our fathers were changed from the earth.*"—*Henry Hammond.*

Title.—The title is peculiar, "*Upon Alamoth,*" suggesting "*a choir of virgins,*" as if this virgin-choir were selected to sing a Psalm that tells of perils and fears and alarms abounding, in order to show that even the feeble virgins may in that day sing without dread, because of "*The Mighty One*" on their side.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Title.—"*Upon Alamoth.*" [To be sung] *en soprano.—Armand de Mestral, quoted by Perowne.*

Whole Psalm.—We sing this Psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us, and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends his church and his word, against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and sin.—*Martin Luther.*

Whole Psalm.—Luther and his companions, with all their bold readiness for danger and death in the cause of truth, had times when their feelings were akin to those of a divine singer, who said, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" But in such hours the unflinching Reformer would cheerily say to his friend Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm; and they could sing it in Luther's own characteristic version:—

A sure stronghold our God is He,
A timely shield and weapon;
Our help he'll be, and set us free
From every ill can happen.

* * * * *

And were the world with devils filled,
All eager to devour us,
Our souls to fear shall little yield,
They cannot overpower us.

S. W. Christophers, in "Hymn Writers and their Hymns," 1866.

Verse 1.—"*God is our refuge and strength,*" etc. It begins abruptly, but nobly; ye may trust in whom and in what ye please; but God (Elohim) *is our refuge and strength.* "*A very present help.*" A help found to be very powerful and effectual in straits and difficulties. The words are very emphatic: עֶזְרָה בְצָרוֹת נִמְצָא מְאֹד *ezrah betsaroth nimtsa meod,* "He is found an exceeding, or superlative, help in difficulties." Such we have found him, and therefore celebrate his praise.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—"*Though the earth be removed.*" John Wesley preached in Hyde-park, on the occasion of the earthquake felt in London, March 8, 1750, and repeated these words. Charles Wesley composed Hymn 67, Wesley's Collection, the following lines of which illustrate this verse:—

How happy then are we,
Who build, O Lord, on thee!
What can our foundation shock?
Though the shatter'd earth remove,
Stands our city on a rock,
On the rock of heavenly love.

Verses 2, 3.—The earth thrown into a state of wild confusion, the mountains hurled into the mighty deep, the sea tossed into a tempest, and the everlasting hills drifting on its foaming billows, are the vivid images by which the divine judgments on wicked and persecuting nations are described in the language of the prophets.—*John Morison.*

Verses 2, 3, 5.—Palestine was frequently subject to earthquakes, as might have been expected from its physical character and situation; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that although all other parts of the land seem to have been occasionally the scene of those terrible convulsions, the capital was almost wholly free from them. Mount Moriah, or the hill of vision, was so called from its towering height, which made it a conspicuous object in the distance. It stands in the centre of a group of hills, which surround it in the form of an amphitheatre, and it was chiefly to this position, under the special blessing of God, that it stood firm and immovable amid the frequent earthquakes that agitated and ravaged the Holy Land.—*Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 3.—"*Selah.*" See "Treasury of David," Vol. I., pp. 25, 29, 346, 382; and Vol. II., pp. 249—252.

Verse 4.—"*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.*" What is the *river* that makes glad the city of God? I answer, God himself is the river, as in the following verse, "*God is in the midst of her.*" 1. God the *Father* is the river: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jer. ii. 13. 2. God the *Son* is the river, the fountain of salvation: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. xiii. 1. 3. God the *Spirit* is the river: "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John vii. 38; iv. 14. What are the *streams* of this river? Answer—the *perfections* of God, the *fulness* of Christ, the *operations* of the Spirit, and these running in the *channel* of the *covenant of promise.*—*Ralph Erskine.*

Verse 4.—"*There is a river,*" etc. This is that flood which Ezekiel beheld in vision, the waters that came down from the right side of the house, and rising first to the ancles—then as the prophet passed onward, to the knees—then to the loins—became afterwards a river that he could not pass over; for the waters

were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. Shall we see in this, with the angelic doctor, the river of grace which burst forth from Mount Calvary? streams branching off hither and thither, the *pelagim* of the Hebrew—"to satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth." Job xxxviii. O "fountain of gardens," "well of living waters," "streams from Lebanon," how do you, the "nether springs" of this world, bring to us something of the everlasting loveliness and peace of those "upper springs," by which the beautiful flock now feed and lie down, none making them afraid! Or with S. Ambrose and S. Bernard, understand the verse of the "river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." And then the rivers of that flood shall indeed "*make glad the city of God*," the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where is the tree of life, that beareth twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month; that country and that river of which the old liturgies say, "They who rest in the bosom of Abraham are in the tabernacles of joy and rest, in the dwellings of light, in the world of pleasure, in the church of the true Jerusalem, where there is no place for affliction, nor way of sadness, where there are no wars with the flesh, and no resistance to temptation, where sin is forgotten, and past danger is only remembered as a present pleasure."—*Thomas Aquinas, Ambrose, and Bernard, in Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 4.—"*There is a river.*" The river of God that flows from his throne. No enemy can cut off this stream from the church of Christ. Observe the reference to Isaiah xxxvi. 2; xxxvii. 25, compared with 2 Chron. xxxii. 2—4. These gently flowing, but full streams, are contrasted with the roaring waves of the sea.—*T. C. Barth.*

Verse 4.—"*There is a river*," *etc.* The allusion is either to the river Kidron, which ran by Jerusalem, or to the waters of Shiloah, which by different courses and branches ran through the city of Jerusalem, and supplied the several parts of it with water, to the joy and comfort of its inhabitants. But the words are to be understood in a figurative sense, as applicable to gospel times; and this river either designs the gospel, the streams of which are its doctrines, which are living waters, that went out from Jerusalem, and which publish glad tidings of great joy to all sensible sinners; or the Spirit and his graces, which are compared to a well and rivers of living water, in the exercises of which the saints have much joy and peace; or else the Lord himself, who is the place of broad rivers and streams to his people, and is both their refreshment and protection; or rather his everlasting love to them is here intended.—*John Gill.*

Verse 4.—Compared with the waterless deserts around, Judæa and Jerusalem were well watered, and drought pressed more severely on the besiegers than the besieged. The allusion here is to the well-known rill and pool of Siloam. So in Isaiah viii. 6, the blessing of God's protection is represented by the waters of Shiloah, which go softly.—*From "The Psalms Chronologically arranged. By Four Friends,"* 1867.

Verse 4.—"*The city.*" The church of God is like a city, 1. Because a city is a place of *security.* 2. A place of *society:* what one wants another supplies; they have mutual fellowship. 3. A place of *unity*, that people may therein live in peace and concord. 4. A place of *trade* and *traffic.* Here is the market of free grace: "Ho, every one that thirsteth," etc. Here is the *pearl of great price* exposed for sale. 5. A place of *freedom* and *liberty*, freedom from the guilt of sin, wrath of God, curse of the law, present evil world, bondage to Satan, etc., etc. 6. A place of *order* and *regularity;* it hath its constitutions and ordinances. 7. A place of *rest*, and commodious to live in, and thus it is opposed to the wilderness. 8. A place of *privileges.* 9. A place of *pomp* and *splendour;* there is the king, the court, the throne. 10. A place of *pleasure* and *beauty*, Psalm xlviii. 2.—*Ralph Erskine.*

Verse 5.—"*God is in the midst of her.*" It is the real presence of Christ, and the supernatural power of his Spirit, which makes the church mighty to the

conquest of souls. The church spreads because her "*God is in the midst of her.*" When at any time she has forgotten her dependence on the invisible intercession of her Head, and the gracious energy of his Spirit, she has found herself shorn of the locks of her great strength, and has become the laughing-stock of the Philistines.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 5.—"*God is in the midst of her,*" etc. The enemies of the church may toss her as waves, but they shall not split her as rocks. She may be dipped in water as a *feather*, but shall not sink therein as *lead*. He that is a well of water within her to keep her from fainting, will also prove a wall of fire about her to preserve her from falling. *Tried* she may be, but *destroyed* she cannot be. Her foundation is the Rock of Ages, and her defence the everlasting Arms. It is only such fabrics as are bottomed upon the *sand*, that are overthrown by the *wind*. The adversaries of God's people will push at them as far as their horns will go, but when they have scoured them by persecution, as tarnished vessels, then God will throw such wisps into the fire.—*William Secker.*

Verse 5.—When the Papists were in their ruff, and Melancthon began sometimes to fear lest the infant Reformation should be stifled in the birth, Luther was wont to comfort him with these words: "*Si nos ruemus, ruet Christus unâ, scilicet ille regnator mundi, esto ruat, malo ego cum Christo ruere, quam cum Cæsare stare;*" that is, If we perish, Christ must fall too (he is in the midst of us), and if it must be so, be it so; I had rather perish with Christ, that great Ruler of the world, than prosper with Cæsar.—*John Collings.*

Verse 5.—"*And that right early.*" Therefore, notice that all the great deliverances wrought in Holy Scripture, were wrought *so early*, as to have been brought to pass in the middle of the night. So Gideon, with his pitchers and lamps against the Midianites; so Saul, when he went forth against Nahash, the Ammonite; so Joshua, when he went up to succour Gibeon; so Samson, when he carried off in triumph the gates of Gaza; so also the associate kings, under the guidance of Elisha, in their expedition against the Moabites, when they, according to God's command, filled the wilderness with ditches, and then beheld their enemies drawn to their destruction, by the reflection of the rising sun upon the water.—*Michael Ayguan.*

Verse 5.—"*Right early.*" Rather, with the margin, *when the morning appeareth.* The restoration of the Jews will be one of the first things at the season of the second advent. It will be accomplished in the very dawning of that day, "when the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing on his wings."—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 7.—"*The Lord of hosts is with us.*" There be three sorts of God's special presence, all which may be justly accounted the church's privilege. First, his *glorious* presence, or his presence testified by eminent glory, and the residence thereof. Thus God is said to be in heaven differentially, so as he is not anywhere else; and heaven is therefore called his throne or dwelling place (1 Kings viii. 39); as a king is nowhere so majestically as upon his throne, or in his chair of state; and this is so great a privilege of the church as that she comes not to enjoy it, until she be triumphant in heaven, and therefore is not the presence here intended. Secondly, his *gracious* presence, or his presence testified by tokens of his grace and favour toward a people, whether visible, as in the temple where he chose to place his name, and wherein above all places he would be worshipped, in which respect he is said to dwell between the cherubim (2 Sam. vi. 2); or spiritual tokens of his grace, as assistance and acceptance in the duties of his worship, together with enjoyment and benefit of his ordinances. Thus he is present with his church and people in times of the gospel: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20. This kind of presence is a privilege of the church militant, that he will be with her in holy and spiritual administrations and ordinances; yet this is not the presence principally intended here. Thirdly, the *providential* presence, or his presence testified by acts of special

providence, wherein the power, wisdom, or any other of God's attributes are eminently put forth, either by way of assistance or defence for a people. Thus the Lord was present with Israel in the wilderness by the pillar of fire and of a cloud (Exod. xiii. 21): "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light." And as this presence was intended for a guide, so was it also for a defence to his people against their enemies, and at which their enemies the Egyptians were troubled. Exodus xiv. 20. By this kind of presence the Lord is with his church militant, in reference to her external regiment, and more especially in her warfare, standing up for her and with her against her enemies; and this is the church's privilege in these words, "*The Lord of hosts is with us.*"—*John Strickland, B.D.* (1601—1670), *in a Sermon, entitled,* "*Immanuel,*" 1644.

Verse 7.—"*The God of Jacob.*" If any shall ask me, Why then the God of Jacob more than the God of Isaac? Though it might suffice that the Spirit of God is pleased so to speak, yet Mr. Calvin gives this reason, the covenant of grace was more solemnly made and publicly ratified with Abraham and Jacob, than it was with Isaac, and therefore when he will be looked upon as a God in covenant with his people, he holds forth himself more frequently by the name of the God of Abraham, and the God of Jacob, than of the God of Isaac; albeit sometimes he is pleased to take upon him that style also.—*John Strickland.*

Verse 7.—"*Our refuge.*" Our refuge, or stronghold, where the church, as a ship in quiet haven, may anchor and ride safe; or it may be a metaphor from the dens or burrows, where weaponless creatures find shelter, when they are hunted and pursued by their enemies, as Prov. xxx. 26, "*The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.*" They are safe in the rock if they can get thither, though never so weak in themselves. So the church, though pursued by bloody enemies, and though weak in herself, if yet she get under the wing of the God of Jacob, she may be fearless, for she is safe there. *He is our refuge.* It were to undervalue God, if we should fear the creatures, when he is with us. Antigonus, when he overheard his soldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, he steps in unto them suddenly, demanding, "And how many do you reckon me for?"—*John Strickland.*

Verse 8.—"*Come, behold the works of the Lord.*" *Venito, videto.* God looks that his works should be well observed, and especially when he hath wrought any great deliverance for his people. Of all things, he cannot abide to be forgotten.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8.—"*What desolations he hath made in the earth.*" We are here first invited to a tragical sight. We are carried into the *camera di morte,* to see the ghastly visage of deaths and desolations all the world over; than which nothing can be more horrible and dreadful. You are called out to see piles of dead carcasses; to see whole basketfuls of heads, as was presented to Jehu: a woeful spectacle, but a necessary one. *See,* therefore, *what desolations the Lord hath wrought in all the earth.* Desolations by wars: how many fields have been drenched with blood, and composted with carcasses; how many millions of men have been cut off in all ages by the edge of the sword! Desolations by famine; wherein men have been forced to make their bodies one another's sepulchres, and mothers to devour their children of a span long. Desolations by plague and pestilence; which have swept away, as our story tells us, eight hundred thousand in one city. Desolations by inundations of waters; which have covered the faces of many regions, and rinsed the earth of her unclean inhabitants. Desolations by earthquakes, which have swallowed up whole cities, and those great and populous. Desolations wrought by the hand of his angels; as in Egypt; in the tents of the Assyrians, one hundred and eighty-five thousand in one night; in the camp of Israel, in David's pestilence. Desolations wrought by the hand of men, in battles and massacres. Desolations by wild beasts; as in the colonies of Ashur planted in Samaria. Desolations

by the swarms of obnoxious and noisome creatures; as in Egypt, and since in Africa: "He spoke the word, and the grasshoppers came, and caterpillars innumerable," Ps. cv. 34. Insomuch as, in the consulship of M. Fulvius Flaccus, after the bloody wars of Africa, followed infinite numbers of locusts; which, after devouring of all herbs and fruit, were, by a sudden wind, hoised into the African sea: infection followed upon their putrefaction, and thereupon a general mortality: in number, four-score thousand died: upon the sea-coast betwixt Carthage and Utica, above two-hundred thousand. Desolations every way, and by what variety of means soever; yet all wrought by the divine hand: "*What desolations he hath wrought.*" Whoever be the instrument, he is the Author.—*Joseph Hall* (*Bishop*).

Verse 8.—Doth not God make great desolations, when he makes that man that counted himself a most religious man, to confess himself not sufficient for one good thought? As it was with Paul, does he not make wars to cease when he turns the heart of a persecutor, earnestly to seek peace with God and man, yea, with his very enemies? Doth he not break the bow and all weapons of war asunder, and that in all the earth, when he proclaims peace to all that are far off and near, professor and profane, Jews and Gentiles?—*Richard Coore.*

Verses 8—10.—"*Come, behold the works of the Lord.*" What works? ruining works. "*What desolations he hath made in the earth.*" God made strange work in the world at that time. Those countries which before were as the garden of God, became like a desolate wilderness: who was able to bear this with patience? Yet the Spirit of God saith in the next words, it must be patiently borne. When God lets men strive and war with one another to a common confusion, yet no man may strive with God about it: and the reason given why no man may, is only this (which is indeed all the reason in the world), *He is God.* So it follows in the Psalm; "*Be still, and know that I am God;*" as if the Lord had said, Not a word, do not strive nor reply; whatever you see, hold your peace; know that I, being God, give no account of any of my matters. —*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—He that destroyeth all the instruments of war doth surely make peace; and he that *maketh war to cease*, doth certainly make peace begin. Peace is made two ways; first, by taking up the differences and reconciling the spirits of men; secondly, by breaking the power and taking away all provisions of war from men. The Lord maketh peace by both these ways, or by either of them.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—"*He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*" When the Romans had, in their way of speaking, given peace to a nation, by extirpating the greatest part of the miserable inhabitants, they collected the arms of the vanquished, and setting them on fire, reduced them to ashes. A medal, struck by Vespasian, the Roman emperor, on finishing his wars in Italy, and other parts of the world, represents the goddess of peace holding an olive branch in one hand, and with a lighted torch in the other, setting fire to a heap of armour. The custom is thus alluded to by Virgil:—

> "*O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos!*
> *Qualis eram, cum primam Præneste sub ipsa*
> *Stravi, scutorumque incendi victor acervos.*"
>
> *Æn.* lib. iii. v. l. 560.

"O that Jupiter would restore to me the years that are past! Such as I was, when under Præneste itself, I routed the foremost rank of the enemy, and victorious set fire to heaps of armour."

The same practice, by the command of Jehovah, prevailed among the Jews; the first instance of it occurs in the book Joshua, xi. 6. It is also celebrated in the songs of Zion, as the attendant of peace, and the proof of its continuance: "He maketh war to cease," etc.—*Paxton's Illustrations of Scripture.*

Verse 9.—"*He burneth the chariot in the fire.*" By degrees the chariot came to be one of the recognised forces in war, and we find it mentioned throughout

the books of Scriptures, not only in its literal sense, but as a metaphor which every one could understand. In the Psalms, for example, are several allusions to the war-chariot. "*He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*" Ps. xlvi. 9. Again: "At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a deep sleep." Ps. lxxvi. 6. And: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." Ps. xx. 7. Now, the force of these passages cannot be properly appreciated unless we realise to ourselves the dread in which the war-chariot was held by the foot-soldiers. Even cavalry were much feared; but the chariots were objects of almost superstitious fear, and the rushing sound of their wheels, the noise of the horses' hoofs, and the shaking of the ground as the "prancing horses and jumping chariots" (Nah. iii. 2), thundered along, are repeatedly mentioned.—*J. G. Wood.*

Verse 10.—"*Be still, and know that I am God.*" The great works of God, wherein his sovereignty appeared, had been described in the foregoing verses. In the awful desolations that he made, and by delivering his people by terrible things, he showed his greatness and dominion. Herein he manifested his power and sovereignty, and so commands all *to be still, and know that he is God.* For says he, "*I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*"

In the words may be observed, 1. A duty described, to be still before God, and under the dispensations of his providence; which implies that we must be still as to *words;* not speaking against the sovereign dispensations of Providence, or complaining of them; not darkening counsel by words without knowledge, or justifying ourselves, and speaking great swelling words of vanity. We must be still as to *actions* and outward behaviour, so as not to oppose God in his dispensations; and as *to the inward frame of our hearts,* cultivating a calm and quiet submission of soul to the sovereign pleasure of God, whatever it may be.

2. We may observe the ground of this duty, namely, *the divinity of God.* His being God is a sufficient reason why we should be *still* before him, in no wise murmuring, or objecting, or opposing, but calmly and humbly submitting to him.

3. How we must fulfil this duty of being still before God, namely, with a sense of his divinity, as seeing the ground of this duty, in that we "*know*" him to be God. Our submission is to be such as becomes rational creatures. God doth not require us to submit contrary to reason, but to submit as seeing the reason and ground of submission. Hence, the bare consideration *that God is God* may well be sufficient to still all objections and oppositions against the divine sovereign dispensations.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 10.—"*Be still, and know that I am God.*" This text of Scripture forbids quarrelling and murmuring against God. Now let me apply as I go along. There are very few, and these very well circumstanced, that find themselves in no hazard of quarrelling with God. I think almost that if angels were on earth, they would be in hazard of it. I will assure you, there are none that have corruption, but they have need to be afraid of this. But many give way to this quarrelling, and consider not the hazard thereof. Beware of it, for it is a dreadful thing to quarrel with God: who may say unto him, "What doest thou?" It is a good account of Aaron, that when God made fire to destroy his sons, he held his peace. Let us then, while we bear the yoke, "sit alone and keep silence, and put our mouths in the dust, if so be there may be hope." Lam. iii. 28, 29. Ye know, the murmuring of the children of Israel cost them very dear. "*Be still,*" that is, beware of murmuring against me, saith the Lord. God gives not an account of his matters to any; because there may be many things ye cannot see through; and therefore ye may think it better to have wanted them, and much more, for

the credit of God and the church. I say, God gives not an account of his matters to any. Beware, then, of drawing rash conclusions.—*Richard Cameron's Sermon, preached July 18th, 1680, three days before he was killed at Airsmoss.*

Verse 10.—"*Be still and know that I am God.*" Faith gives the soul a view of the great God. It teacheth the soul to set his almightness against sin's magnitude, and his infinitude against sin's multitude; and so quencheth the temptation. The reason why the presumptuous sinner fears so little, and the despairing soul so much, is for want of knowing God as great; therefore, to cure them both, the serious consideration of God, under this notion, is propounded: "*Be still, and know that I am God;*" as if he had said, Know, O ye wicked, that I am God, who can avenge myself when I please upon you, and cease to provoke me by your sins to your own confusion; and again, know, ye trembling souls, that I am God; and therefore able to pardon the greatest sins, and cease to dishonour me by your unbelieving thoughts of me.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 10.—"*Be still, and know that I am the Lord.*" Not everyone is a fit scholar for God's school, but such as are purified according to the purification of the sanctuary. Carnal men are drowned in fleshly and worldly cares, and neither purged nor lifted up to receive the light of God, or else indisposed by prejudice or passion, that they cannot learn at all. We will never savingly know him, till our souls be free of these indispositions. Among all the elements the earth is fitted to receive seed of the sower; if he cast it into the fire, it burneth; if in the air, it withereth; if in the waters, it rotteth, the instability of that body is for producing monsters, because it closeth not straitly the seeds of fishes. Spirits of a fiery temper, or light in inconstancy, or moving as waters, are not for God's lessons, but such as in *stayed humility* do rest under his hand. If waters be mixed with clay in their substance, or their surface be troubled with wind, they can neither receive nor render any image; such unstable spirits in the school of God, lose their time and endanger themselves.—*William Struther.*

Verse 10.—"*Be still, and know,*" etc. As you must come and *see* (verse 8), so come and *hear* what the Lord saith to those enemies of yours.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 11.—"*The Lord of hosts is with us.*" On Tuesday Mr. Wesley could with difficulty be understood, though he often attempted to speak. At last, with all the strength he had, he cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us." Again, raising his hand, and waving it in triumph, he exclaimed with thrilling effect, "The best of all is, God is with us." These words seem to express the leading feature of his whole life. God had been with him from early childhood; his providence had guided him through all the devious wanderings of human life; and now, when he was entering the "valley of the shadow of death," the same hand sustained him.—*From "Wesley and his Coadjutors. By Rev. W. C. Larrabee, A.M. Edited by Rev. B. F. Tefft, D.D. Cincinnati.* 1851."

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The song of faith in troublous times. I. *Our refuge.* Our only, impregnable, accessible, delightful place of retreat is our God. II. *Our strength.* Our all-sufficient, unconquerable, honourable, and emboldening strength is our God. III. *Our help.* Ever near, sympathising, faithful, real, and potent is our God.

Verse 1.—"*A very present help in trouble.*" Religion never so valuable as in seasons of trouble, sickness, and death. God is present helping us to bear trouble, to improve it, and to survive it. Present by gracious communications and sweet manifestations; present most when he seems absent, restraining, overruling, and sanctifying trouble. Trust and wait.—*James Smith.*

Verse 2.—The reasons, advantages, and glory of holy courage.

Verses 2,3.—I. The great and many causes for fear. 1. What might come—mountains, waters, etc., persecution, pestilence, etc. 2. What must come—afflictions, death, judgment. II. The great and one cause for not fearing. Fearlessness under such circumstances should be well grounded. God himself is our refuge, and we confiding in him are fearless.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 4.—Glad tidings in sad times; or, the city of God in the times of trouble and confusion, watered with the river of consolation.—*Ralph Erskine.*

Verse 4.—What can this "*river*" be, but that blessed covenant to which David himself repaired in the time of trouble? . . . . And what are "*the streams*" of this river, but the outgoings and effects of this divine constitution? I. The blood of Jesus. II. The influences of the Holy Spirit. III. The doctrines and promises of the gospel. IV. The ordinances of religion. V. All the means of grace.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 4.—"*Make glad the city of God.*" There are four ways in which the streams of a river would gladden the citizens. I. The first regards *prospect.* II. The second regards *traffic.* III. The third regards *fertility.* IV. The fourth regards *supply.*—*W. Jay.*

Verse 4.—"*City of God.*" The church may be called "the city *of God*" because, 1. He dwells in it (see verse 5). 2. He *founded* it and *built* it. 3. It derives all *privileges* and *immunities* from him. 4. He is the chief Ruler or Governor there. 5. It is his property. 6. He draws the *rent* of it.—*Ralph Erskine.*

Verses 4, 5.—To the church, Joy, Establishment, Deliverance.

Verse 6.—What man did and what God did.

Verse 8.—"*Behold the works of the Lord.*" I. *They are worth beholding,* for they are all like himself; well becoming his infinite power, wisdom, justice. II. *Our eyes were given us for this very purpose*—not for the beholding of vanity, not for the ensnaring or wounding of the soul; but for the use and honour of the Creator. III. *The Lord delights to have his works beheld;* he knows their excellency and perfection, and that the more they are seen and noted the more honour will accrue to the Maker of them. IV. *None but we can do it;* there is great reason then that we should carefully "*behold,*" etc. V. *This shall be of great benefit to ourselves.*—*Bishop Hall.*

Verse 8.—The desolations of the Lord, the consolation of his saints. I. A declaration of what has happened. II. A promise of what shall be achieved.—*Spurgeon's Sermons, No.* 190.

Verse 9.—The Great Peacemaker, or the principles of the gospel our only hope, for the total abolition of war.

Verse 10.—"*Be still, and know that I am God.*" The sole consideration that God is God, sufficient to still all objections to his sovereignty.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 10.—"*I am God.*" 1. In that he is God, he is an absolutely and infinitely *perfect* being. 2. As he is God he is so *great,* that he is infinitely above all comprehension. 3. As he is God, all things are his *own.* 4. In that he is God, he is *worthy* to be sovereign over all things. 5. In that he is God, he *will* be sovereign, and *will* act as such. 6. In that he is God, he is able to *avenge* himself on those who oppose his sovereignty.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

PSALM XLVII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician. *Many songs were dedicated to this leader of the chorus, but he was not overloaded thereby. God's service is such delight that it cannot weary us; and that choicest part of it, the singing of his praises, is so pleasurable that we cannot have too much of it. Doubtless, the chief musician, as he was commissioned with so many sacred songs, felt that the more the merrier.* A Psalm for the Sons of Korah. *We cannot agree with those who think that the sons of Korah were the authors of these Psalms; they have all the indications of David's authorship that one could expect to see. Our ear has grown accustomed to the ring of David's compositions, and we are morally certain that we hear it in this Psalm. Every expert would detect here the autography of the Son of Jesse, or we are greatly mistaken. The Sons of Korah sang these Psalms, but we believe they did not write them. Fit singers were they whose origin reminded them of sin, whose existence was a proof of sovereign grace, and whose name has a close connection with the name of Calvary.*

SUBJECT.—*Whether the immediate subject of this Psalm be the carrying up of the ark from the house of Obededom to Mount Zion, or the celebration of some memorable victory, it would be hard to decide. As even the doctors differ, who shall dogmatise? But it is very clear that both the present sovereignty of Jehovah, and the final victories of our Lord, are here fitly hymned, while his ascension, as the prophecy of them, is sweetly gloried in.*

DIVISION.—*In so short a Psalm, there is no need of any other division than that indicated by the musical pause at the end of verse* 4.

EXPOSITION.

O CLAP your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

1. "*O clap your hands.*" The most natural and most enthusiastic tokens of exultation are to be used in view of the victories of the Lord, and his universal reign. Our joy in God may be demonstrative, and yet he will not censure it. "*All ye people.*" The joy is to extend to all nations; Israel may lead the van, but all the Gentiles are to follow in the march of triumph, for they have an equal share in that kingdom where there is neither Greek nor Jew, but Christ is all and in all. Even now if they did but know it, it is the best hope of all nations that Jehovah ruleth over them. If they cannot all speak the same tongue, the symbolic language of the hands they can all use. All people will be ruled by the Lord in the latter days, and all will exult in that rule; were they wise they would submit to it now, and rejoice to do so; yea, they would clap their hands in rapture at the thought. "*Shout,*" let your voices keep tune with your hands. "*Unto God,*" let him have all the honours of the day, and let them be loud, joyous, universal, and undivided. "*With the voice of triumph,*" with gladsome sounds, consonant with such splendid victories, so great a King, so excellent a rule, and such gladsome subjects. Many are human languages, and yet the nations may triumph as with one voice. Faith's view of God's government is full of transport. The prospect of the universal reign of the Prince of Peace is enough to make the tongue of the dumb sing; what will the reality be? Well might the poet of the seasons bid mountains and valleys raise their joyous hymn—

> "For the GREAT SHEPHERD reigns,
> And his *unsuffering* kingdom yet will come."

2 For the LORD most high *is* terrible ; *he is* a great King over all the earth.

2. "*For the Lord,*" or JEHOVAH, the self-existent and only God ; "*Most high,*" most great in power, lofty in dominion, eminent in wisdom, elevated in glory. "*Is terrible,*" none can resist his power or stand before his vengeance ; yet as these terrors are wielded on the behalf of his subjects, they are fit reasons for rejoicing. Omnipotence, which is terrible to crush, is almighty to protect. At a grand review of the troops of a great prince, all his loyal subjects are filled with triumph, because their liege lord is so able to defend his own, and so much dreaded by his foes. "*He is a great King over all the earth.*" Not over Judea only, but even to the utmost isles his reign extends. Our God is no local deity, no petty ruler of a tribe ; in infinite majesty he rules the mightiest realm as absolute arbiter of destiny, sole monarch of all lands, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Not a hamlet or an islet is excluded from his dominion. How glorious will that era be when this is seen and known of all ; when in the person of Jesus all flesh shall behold the glory of the Lord !

3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

3. "*He,*" with whom is infinite power, "*shall subdue the people under us.*" The battle is not ours but the Lord's. He will take his own time, but he will certainly achieve victory for his church. Truth and righteousness shall through grace climb to the ascendant. We wage no doubtful warfare. Hearts the most rebellious, and wills the most stubborn, shall submit to all-conquering grace. All the Lord's people, whether Jews or Gentiles, may clap their hands at this, for God's victory will be theirs ; but surely apostles, prophets, ministers, and those who suffer and labour the most, may take the largest share in the joy. Idolatry, infidelity, superstition, we shall yet tread upon, as men tread down the stones of the street. "*And the nations under our feet.*" The church of God shall be the greatest of monarchies, her victory shall be signal and decisive. Christ shall take to himself his great power and reign, and all the tribes of men shall own at once his glory and the glory of his people in him. How changed will be the position of affairs in coming ages ! The people of God have been under the feet of men in long and cruel persecutions, and in daily contempt ; but God will reverse the position, and the best in character shall be first in honour.

4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

While as yet we see not all things put under him, we are glad to put ourselves and our fortunes at his disposal. "*He shall choose our inheritance for us.*" We feel his reign to be so gracious that we even now ask to be in the fullest degree the subjects of it. We submit our will, our choice, our desire, wholly to him. Our heritage here and hereafter we leave to him, let him do with us as seemeth him good. "*The excellency of Jacob whom he loved.*" He gave his ancient people their portion, he will give us ours, and we ask nothing better ; this is the most spiritual and real manner of clapping our hands because of his sovereignty, namely, to leave all our affairs in his hands, for then our hands are empty of all care for self, and free to be used in his honour. He was the boast and glory of Israel, he is and shall be ours. He loved his people and became their greatest glory ; he loves us, and he shall be our exceeding joy. As for the latter days, we ask nothing better than to stand in our appointed lot, for if we have but a portion in our Lord Jesus, it is enough for our largest desires. Our beauty, our boast, our best treasure, lies in having such a God to trust in, such a God to love us.

Selah. Yes, pause, ye faithful songsters. Here is abundant room for holy meditation—

"Muse awhile, obedient thought,
Lo, the theme's with rapture fraught;
See thy King, whose realm extends
E'en to earth's remotest ends!
Gladly shall the nations own
Him their Lord and God alone;
Clap their hands with holy mirth,
Hail him MONARCH OF THE EARTH.
Come, my soul, before him bow,
Gladdest of his subjects thou;
Leave thy portion to his choice,
In his sovereign will rejoice,
This thy purest, deepest bliss,
He is thine and thou art his."

5 God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

5. "*God is gone up with a shout.*" Faith hears the people already shouting. The command of the first verse is here regarded as a fact. The fight is over, the conqueror ascends to his triumphal chariot, and rides up to the gates of the city which is made resplendent with the joy of his return. The words are fully applicable to the ascension of the Redeemer. We doubt not that angels and glorified spirits welcomed him with acclamations. He came not without song, shall we imagine that he returned in silence? "*The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*" Jesus is Jehovah. The joyful strain of the trumpet betokens the splendour of his triumph. It was meet to welcome one returning from the wars with martial music. Fresh from Bozrah, with his garments all red from the winepress, he ascended, leading captivity captive, and well might the clarion ring out the tidings of Immanuel's victorious return.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

"*Sing praises.*" What jubilation is here, when five times over the whole earth is called upon to sing *to God!* He is worthy, he is Creator, he is goodness itself. *Sing praises*, keep on with the glad work. Never let the music pause. He never ceases to be good, let us never cease to be grateful. Strange that we should need so much urging to attend to so heavenly an exercise. "*Sing praises unto our King.*" Let him have all our praise; no one ought to have even a particle of it. Jesus shall have it all. Let his sovereignty be the fount of gladness. It is a sublime attribute, but full of bliss to the faithful. Let our homage be paid not in groans but songs. He asks not slaves to grace his throne; he is no despot; singing is fit homage for a monarch so blessed and gracious. Let all hearts that own his sceptre sing and sing on for ever, for there is everlasting reason for thanksgiving while we dwell under the shadow of such a throne.

7 For God *is* the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

7. "*For God is the King of all the earth.*" The Jews of our Saviour's time resented this truth, but had their hearts been right they would have rejoiced in it. They would have kept their God to themselves, and not even have allowed the Gentile dogs to eat the crumbs from under his table. Alas! how selfishness turns honey into wormwood. Jehovah is not the God of the Jews only, all the nations of the earth are, through the Messiah, yet to own him Lord. Meanwhile his providential throne governs all events beneath the sky. "*Sing ye praises with understanding.*" Sing a didactic Psalm. Sound doctrine praises God. Even under the economy of types and ceremonies, it is clear that the Lord had regard to the spirituality of worship, and would be

praised thoughtfully, intelligently, and with deep appreciation of the reason for song. It is to be feared from the slovenly way in which some make a noise in singing, that they fancy any sound will do. On the other hand, from the great attention paid by some to the mere music, we feel sadly sure that the sense has no effect upon them. Is it not a sin to be tickling men's ears with sounds when we profess to be adoring the Lord? What has a sensuous delight in organs, anthems, etc., to do with devotion? Do not men mistake physical effects for spiritual impulses? Do they not often offer to God strains far more calculated for human amusement than for divine acceptance? And understanding enlightened of the Holy Spirit is then and then only fully capable of offering worthy praise.

8 God reigneth over the heathen : God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

Now at this moment, over the most debased idolaters, God holds a secret rule ; here is work for faith. How we ought to long for the day when this truth shall be changed in its aspect, and the rule now unrecognised shall be delighted in ! The great truth that *God reigneth* in providence is the guarantee that in a gracious gospel sense his promise shall be fulfilled, and his kingdom shall come. "*He sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*" Unmoved he occupies an undisputed throne, whose decrees, acts, and commands are holiness itself. What other throne is like this? Never was it stained with injustice, or defiled with sin. Neither is he who sits upon it dismayed, or in a dilemma. He sits in serenity, for he knows his own power, and sees that his purposes will not miscarry. Here is reason enough for holy song.

9 The princes of the people are gathered together, *even* the people of the God of Abraham : for the shields of the earth *belong* unto God : he is greatly exalted.

9. "*The princes of the people are gathered together.*" The prophetic eye of the psalmist sees the willing subjects of the great King assembled to celebrate his glory. Not only the poor and the men of low estate are there, but nobles bow their willing necks to his sway. "All kings shall bow down before him." No people shall be unrepresented ; their great men shall be good men, their royal ones regenerate ones. How august will be the parliament where the Lord Jesus shall open the court, and princes shall rise up to do him honour ! "*Even the people of the God of Abraham.*" That same God, who was known only to here and there a patriarch like the father of the faithful, shall be adored by a seed as many as the stars of heaven. The covenant promise shall be fulfilled, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Shiloh shall come, and "to him shall the gathering of the people be." Babel's dispersion shall be obliterated by the gathering arm of the Great Shepherd King.

"*For the shields of the earth belong unto God.*" The insignia of pomp, the emblems of rank, the weapons of war, all must pay loyal homage to the King of all. Right honourables must honour Jesus, and majesties must own him to be far more majestic. Those who are earth's protectors, the shields of the commonwealth, derive their might from him, and are his. All principalities and powers must be subject unto Jehovah and his Christ, for "*He is greatly exalted.*" In nature, in power, in character, in glory, there is none to compare with him. Oh, glorious vision of a coming era ! Make haste, ye wheels of time ! Meanwhile, ye saints, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Some have applied this Psalm to Christ's ascension; but it speaks of his Second Coming. The Mighty One is seated peacefully on his throne. We are referred back to Psalm xlv.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"*O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.*" This should be done, 1. Cheerfully, "*Clap your hands,*" for this is a sign of inward joy, Nah. iii. 19. 2. Universally: "O clap your hands, *all ye people.*" 3. Vocally: "*Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.*" 4. Frequently: "*Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises,*" verse 6; and again "*sing praises,*" verse 7. It cannot be done too frequently. 5. Knowingly and discreetly: "Sing ye praises *with understanding;*" know the reason why ye are to praise him.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—"*O clap your hands,*" etc. Such expressions of pious and devout affection as to some may seem indecent and imprudent, yet ought not to be hastily censured and condemned, much less ridiculed; because if they cŏme from an upright heart, God will accept the strength of the affection, and excuse the weakness of the expressions of it.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 1.—"*O clap your hands.*" The *voice of melody* is not so much to be uttered with the tongue, as with the hands; that is, it is our deeds not our words, by which God is here to be praised. Even as it was in him whose pattern we are to follow: "Jesus began both to do and to teach."—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 1.—"*All ye people.*" *Peoples,* in the plural. Here it is used to call both Jews and Gentiles—all nations.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1.—"*Shout unto God.*" *Jubilate Deo: in* God, and *concerning* God, and *in honour of* God. He does not excite them to carnal joy.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 2.—"*For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth.*" The church celebrates the ascension of Christ, because then he was "highly exalted;" then he became "*terrible*" to his enemies, all power in heaven and in earth being committed to him; and then he began to display the excellent majesty of his universal kingdom, to which he was then inaugurated, being crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords."—*George Horne.*

Verse 2.—"*The Lord most high is terrible.*" Christ is "*terrible,*" that is, fearful, or meet to be feared, not of his children only for their good, but of the wicked also for their punishment; "*terrible*" to the devil, as being stronger than he, casting out the prince of darkness by the finger of God. Luke xi. 22; John xii. 31. And therefore so soon as an unclean spirit saw Jesus, he cried out, "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us?" Mark i. 24; or as other devils, Matt. viii. 29, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" for the devils in believing tremble. "*Terrible*" to hypocrites, and other impious agents of the devil, as having his fan in his hand to make clean his floor, and to gather his wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matt. iii. 12. Or Christ is *excelsus in potentia, terribilis in justitia;* high in power, and fearful in justice; high in exalting the good, and terrible in humbling the bad.—*John Boys.*

Verse 3.—"*He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*" The consequence of our Lord's ascension was the going forth of the all-subduing Word, under the influence and direction of which, the convinced and converted nations renounced their idols and their lusts, and bowed their willing necks to the yoke of Jesus. This is that great conquest, foreshowed by the victories of Joshua, David, and all the faithful heroes of old time, and foretold in language borrowed from their history.—*George Horne.*

Verse 3.—"*He shall subdue the people under us,*" etc., or *he shall lead* like

sheep; or *bring unto the fold;* as divers render the word, by comparing Isa. v. 17; Micah ii. 12. He seems to speak of such a subjugation of them, as was for the good of the people subdued, because this is matter of rejoicing to them, verse 1; which is true both of these people whom David subdued, who thereby had opportunities, obligations, and encouragements to own and worship the true God, which was the only way to their true and lasting happiness; and especially of those Gentiles who were subdued to Christ by the preaching of the gospel. The Gentile converts were in some sort brought under the Jews, because they were subjected to Christ and to his apostles, and to the primitive church, which were Jews.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 3.—"*And the nations under our feet.*" By this manner of speech is meant, that the Gentiles should be *scholars*, and the Jews *schoolmasters*, as it were to them; for *to sit under the feet*, or *at the feet*, is used in Scripture for being a scholar, or learning, as Acts xxii. 3.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 4.—"*He shall choose.*" Futures are variously rendered; and accordingly the vulgar Latin, Syriac, and Arabic, render this word, *He hath chosen.*—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 4.—"*He shall choose our inheritance for us.*" It is reported of a woman who, being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die; she answered, "Which God pleases." But, said one, if God should refer it to you, which would you choose? "Truly," replied she, "I would refer it to him again." Thus that man obtains his will of God, whose will is subjected to God. We are not to be troubled that we have no more *from* God, but we are to be troubled that we do no more *for* God. Christians, if the Lord be well pleased with your persons, should not you be well pleased with your conditions? There is more reason that you should be pleased with them, than that he should be pleased with you. Believers should be like sheep, which change their pastures at the will of the shepherd; or like vessels in a house, which stand to be filled or emptied at the pleasure of their owner. He that sails upon the sea of this world in his own bottom, will sink at last into a bottomless ocean. Never were any their own carvers, but they were sure to cut their own fingers.—*William Secker.*

Verse 4.—"*He shall choose our inheritance for us,*" means that he who knows what is better for us than ourselves, *hath chosen*, that is, hath appointed, and that of his own good will and mercy towards us, *our inheritance;* not only things meet for this life, as lands, and houses, and possessions, etc., but even all other things concerning the hope of a better life, to wit, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, an everlasting habitation, an inheritance which is immortal and undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven.—*John Boys.*

Verse 4.—"*The excellency (or glory) of Jacob, whom he loved;*" that is, even all those excellent things that he gave and promised to Jacob, wherein he might glory and rejoice. The faithful mean, that they had as great, both abundance and assurance of God's grace and goodness, as ever Jacob had.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 4.—It may be thou art godly and poor. 'Tis well; but canst thou tell whether, if thou wert not poor, thou wouldst be godly? Surely God knows us better than we ourselves do, and therefore can best fit the estate to the person.—*Giles Fletcher.*

Verse 5.—"*God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*" It is worthy (as Origen suggests) that this mention of the "*shout*," and the *voice* of the "*trumpet*," serves to connect together past and future events in the history of the church and of the world, and carry our thoughts forward to Christ's coming to judgment.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5.—Thou hast great cause, O my soul, to praise him, and to rejoice before him, especially if thou considerest that Christ ascended not for himself, but also for thee: it is God in our nature that is gone up to heaven: whatever

God acted on the person of Christ, that he did as in thy behalf, and he means to act the very same on thee. Christ as a public person ascended up to heaven; thy interest is in this very ascension of Jesus Christ; and therefore dost thou consider thy Head as soaring up? O let every member praise his name; let thy tongue (called thy *glory*), glory in this, and trumpet out his praise, that in respect of thy duty it may be verified: "Christ is *gone up with a shout, the Lord with a sound of a trumpet.*"—*Isaac Ambrose.*

Verse 7.—"*For God is the King of all the earth:*" as if he had said, "Our King, said I? it is too little; he is King *of all the earth.*"—*John Trapp.*

Verse 7.—"*Sing ye praises with understanding.*" How may we make melody in our hearts to God in singing of Psalms? We must sing "*with understanding.*" We must not be guided by the *time*, but the *words* of the Psalm; we must mind the matter more than the music, and consider what we sing, as well as how we sing; the tune may affect the fancy, but it is the matter affects the heart, and that God principally eyes. The psalmist adviseth us in this particular, and so doth the apostle (1 Cor. xiv. 15). Otherwise this sweet duty would be more the work of a chorister than of a Christian, and we should be more delighted in an anthem of the musician's making, than in a Psalm of the Spirit's making. A Lapide observes that in the text, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, the word *understanding* is *maschil*, מַשְׂכִּיל, profound judgment: we must sing *wisely*, if we will sing gratefully; we must relish what we sing. In a word, we must sing as we must pray; now the most rude petitioner will *understand* what he prays. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. If we do not understand what we sing, it argues carelessness of spirit, or hardness of heart; and this makes the service impertinent. Upon this the worthy Davenant cries out, "Adieu to the bellowing of the Papists, who sing in an unknown tongue." God will not understand us in that service which we understand not ourselves. One of the first pieces of the creation was *light*, and this must break out in every duty.—*John Wells* (—1676), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 7.—"*Sing ye praises with understanding,*" *sing an instructive song.* Let *sense* and *sound* go together. Let your *hearts* and *heads* go with your *voices. Understand* what you *sing*, and *feel* what you *understand.*—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7.—"*Sing ye praises with understanding;*" because in the full light of the new dispensation, the darkness of the patriarchal ages, the seeing as through a glass of the Levitical law, are turned into the vision of full and very reality.—*Hugo Victorinus.*

Verse 7.—"*Sing ye praises with understanding.*" Mark this, thou who daily readest the Psalms, and yet does not understand them.—*Simon de Muis.*

Verse 7.—"*With understanding.*" If they had sung "*with understanding,*" they had not adored stones. When a man sensible sang to a stone insensible, did he sing "*with understanding*"? But now, brethren, we see not with our eyes whom we adore, and yet correctly we adore. Much more is God commended to us, that with our eyes we see him not.—*Augustine.*

Verse 9.—*The princes of the people are gathered together.*" I note from hence, 1. That it is not impossible for great men to be good men; for the heads of a country to be members of Christ; and for princes as well as the people to serve the God of Abraham. It is said by the prophet, "upon my peace came great bitterness;" "a thousand fell on the left hand, but ten thousand at the right hand" (Psalm xci. 7): ten perish in their prosperity, for one that falleth in adversity. *Homo victus in paradiso, victum in stercore:* Adam in the garden of pleasure was overcome by the subtil serpent, whereas Job on the dunghill of misery was more than a conqueror. Woodmen say that deer are more circumspect in fat pastures; so the godly fear most in a rich estate: *nihil timendum video* (saith one), *timeo tamen.** It is a sweet prayer of our

* Seneca.

church in the Litany, "Good Lord, deliver us in all time of our wealth," insinuating that our minds are not so wanton in want as in abundance: yet, as you see, such is Christ's unspeakable goodness towards all sorts of men, in preventing them even with the riches of his mercy, that not only the mean people, but also the mighty princes among the heathen are joined unto the church of the God of Abraham.—*John Boys.*

Verse 9.—"*Gathered together.*" Christ's gathering of the saints together unto him will be at his second coming, his coming to judgment, the general and final judgment. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." 2 Thess. ii. 1.—*James Scot* (—1773), *in* "*A Collection of Sermons*," 1774.

Verse 9.—"*The people of the God of Abraham.*" First, touching *the God of Abraham*, it is Christ, whose day Abraham desired to see, and in seeing whereof he did so much rejoice (John viii.); that is, not only the day of his birth, which he saw, as we learn by the oath which he caused his servant to take (Gen. xxiv.), but also the day of his passion, which he saw long ago, and rejoiced in seeing it, when he said to his son Isaac in the mount, "The Lord will provide a sacrifice." Gen. xxii. 8. Secondly, "*The people of the God of Abraham*," are his children and posterity: not only they that are the seed of Abraham, coming out of his loins, and are "*the children of the flesh*" (Rom. ix. 9); but "*the children of the promise;*" for if they that come out of Abraham's loins were only his children, then the Hagarins, the Turks, and Ishmaelites should be the people of God; "*But in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*" They that lay hold of the promise by faith, "They that are of the faith, are the children of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7), that have the same spirit of faith that Abraham had. As the apostle saith (Rom. ii. 28), "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, but a Jew inwardly is the true Jew." They that worship the Messias by believing in him with the faith of Abraham, they are Abraham's children, and *the people of Abraham's God*, which thing John Baptist affirmeth (Matt. iii.), "God can of stones raise up children to Abraham." So the Gentiles, which worshipped stones, and therefore were "*like unto them*" (Psalm cxv.), were notwithstanding raised up to be children to Abraham.—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 9.—"*The shields of the earth belong unto God.*" There we have the *rulers* of the earth set forth by a double relation; the one *upward*, they are *scuta Deo*, they belong to God; the other *downward*, they are *scuta terræ*, "*the shields of the earth;*" and both these noting two things, their *dignity* and their *duty*. They belong to God, it is their honour that he hath sealed them: they belong to God, it is their duty to be subject to him. They are "*shields of the earth,*" it is their honour that they are above others: they are "*the shields of the earth,*" it is their duty to protect others.—*Edward Reynolds* (*Bishop*).

Verse 9.—"*The shields of the earth are God's,*" is understood by many as spoken of princes. I admit that this metaphor is of frequent occurrence in Scripture, nor does this sense seem to be unsuitable to the scope of the passage. . . . . Yet the sense will be more simple if we explain the words thus: That, as it is God alone who defends and preserves the world, the high and supreme majesty which is sufficient for so exalted and difficult a work as the preservation of the world, is justly looked upon with admiration. The sacred writer expressly uses the word *shields* in the plural number, for, considering the various and almost innumerable dangers which unceasingly threaten every part of the world, the providence of God must necessarily interpose in many ways, and make use, as it were, of many bucklers.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—"*The shields of the earth.*" Magistrates are said to *bear the sword*, not to be swords; and they are said *to be shields*, not to bear shields; and all this to show that protection and preservation are more essential and intrinsical to their office than destruction and punishment are.—*Joseph Caryl.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Unusual and enthusiastic expressions of joy when justifiable and even desirable.

Verses 1—4.—Joy the true spirit of worship. 1. Joy in God's character. 2. In his reign. 3. In the triumphs of his gospel. 4. In his favour to his saints.

Verse 2.—The terrors of the Lord viewed by faith as a subject of joy.

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—The universal reign of Christ as it is and is to be.

Verse 3.—The hope of victory to the church. What shall be subdued? By whose instrumentality? "*Us.*" By whose power? "*He.*" When it shall be accomplished? What is the token of it? The ascension, verse 5.

Verse 3.—I. The final triumph of the saints. All enemies subdued under them in earth and hell, within and without. 1. Gradually. 2. Completely. II. The power by which it is accomplished.—"*He shall,*" etc. 1. Not without means. 2. Not by means only. 3. But by appointed means made potent by divine energy.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—This comprehends time and eternity. It is a matter of fact, of holy acquiescence, of desire, of thankfulness.

Verse 4.—I. God is willing to choose our inheritance for us in time and eternity. II. His choice is better than ours—"*the excellency of Jacob.*" III. He will leave us to the consequences of our own choice. IV. He will help us in obtaining that which he chooses for us.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—The ascension. Its publicity, solemnity, triumph, joy. Who went up. Where he went up. To what he went up. For what purpose. With what result.

Verse 6.—The importance of holy song. The repetition rebukes our slackness, and implies that earnestness, frequency, delight, and universality should characterise the praises offered.

Verse 7 (*last clause*).—The psalmody of the instructed, and instruction by psalmody; praise should be both the fruit and the vehicle of teaching.

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—Divine sovereignty always connected with holiness.

Verse 8.—I. God has a throne of holiness, for which he is to be feared by all men. II. A throne of grace, for which he is to be loved by his redeemed. III. A throne of glory, for which he is to be praised by his whole creation.

Verse 9.—I. A shield is a *merciful* weapon, none more so. II. A shield is a *venturous* weapon, a kind of surety, which bears the blows and receives the injuries which were intended for another. III. A shield is a *strong* weapon, to repel the darts of wickedness and break them in pieces. IV. A shield is an honourable weapon, none more: taking away of shields was a sign of victory; preserving them a sign of glory. V. Remember, a shield must ever *have an eye to guide it*—you the shields, the law the eye.—*Bishop Reynolds.*

WORK UPON THE FORTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

In the Works of John Boys, 1626, folio, pp. 931—937, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

PSALM XLVIII.

TITLE.—A Song and Psalm for the Sons of Korah.—*A song for joyfulness and a Psalm for reverence. Alas! every song is not a Psalm, for poets are not all heaven-born, and every Psalm is not a song, for in coming before God we have to utter mournful confessions as well as exulting praises. The Sons of Korah were happy in having so large a selection of song; the worship where such a variety of music was used could not become monotonous, but must have given widest scope for all the sacred passions of gracious souls.*

SUBJECT AND DIVISION.—*It would be idle dogmatically to attribute this song to any one event of Jewish history. Its author and date are unknown. It records the withdrawal of certain confederate kings from Jerusalem, their courage failing them before striking a blow. The mention of the ships of Tarshish may allow us to conjecture that the Psalm was written in connection with the overthrow of Ammon, Moab, and Edom in the reign of Jehoshaphat; and if the reader will turn to* 2 *Chron.* XX., *and note especially verses* 19, 25, *and* 36, *he will probably accept the suggestion. Verses* 1, 2, 3, *are in honour of the Lord and the city dedicated to his worship. From* 4—8 *the song records the confusion of Zion's foes, ascribing all the praise to God;* 9, 10, 11 *extolling Zion, and avowing Jehovah to be her God for evermore.*

EXPOSITION.

GREAT *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

1. "*Great is the Lord.*" How great Jehovah is essentially none can conceive; but we can all see that he is great in the deliverance of his people, great in their esteem who are delivered, and great in the hearts of those enemies whom he scatters by their own fears. Instead of the mad cry of Ephesus, "Great is Diana," we bear the reasonable, demonstrable, self-evident testimony, "Great is Jehovah." There is none great in the church but the Lord. Jesus is "the *great* Shepherd," he is "a Saviour, and a great one," our great God and Saviour, our great High Priest; his Father has divided him a portion with the great, and his name shall be great unto the ends of the earth. "*And greatly to be praised.*" According to his nature should his worship be; it cannot be too constant, too laudatory, too earnest, too reverential, too sublime. There is none like the Lord, and there should be no praises like his praises. "*In the city of our God.*" He is great there, and should be greatly praised there. If all the world beside renounced Jehovah's worship, the chosen people in his favoured city should continue to adore him, for in their midst and on their behalf his glorious power has been so manifestly revealed. In the church the Lord is to be extolled though all the nations rage against him. Jerusalem was the peculiar abode of the God of Israel, the seat of the theocratic government, and the centre of prescribed worship, and even thus is the church the place of divine manifestation. "*In the mountain of his holiness.*" Where his holy temple, his holy priests, and his holy sacrifices might continually be seen. Zion was a mount, and as it was the most renowned part of the city, it is mentioned as a synonym for the city itself. The church of God is a mount for elevation and for conspicuousness, and it should be adorned with holiness, her sons being

partakers of the holiness of God. Only by holy men can the Lord be fittingly praised, and they should be incessantly occupied with his worship.

2. "*Beautiful for situation.*" Jerusalem was so naturally, she was styled the Queen of the East; the church is so spiritually, being placed near God's heart, within the mountains of his power, upon the hills of his faithfulness, in the centre of providential operations. The elevation of the church is her beauty. The more she is above the world the fairer she is. "*The joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.*" Jerusalem was the world's star; whatever light lingered on earth was borrowed from the oracles preserved by Israel. An ardent Israelite would esteem the holy city as the eye of the nations, the most precious pearl of all lands. Certainly the church of God, though despised of men, is the true joy and hope of the world. "*On the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*" Either meaning that Jerusalem was in the northern extremity of Judah, or it may denote that part of the city that lay to the north of Mount Zion. It was the glory of Jerusalem to be God's city, the place of his regal dwelling, and it is the joy of the church that God is in her midst. The great God is the great King of the church, and for her sake he rules all the nations. The people among whom the Lord deigns to dwell are privileged above all others; the lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage. We who dwell in Great Britain in the sides of the north, have this for our chief glory, that the Lord is known in our land, and the abode of his love is among us.

3. "*God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*" We worship no unknown God. We know him as our refuge in distress, we delight in him as such, and run to him in every time of need. We know nothing else as our refuge. Though we are made kings, and our houses are palaces, yet we have no confidence in ourselves, but trust in the Lord Protector, whose well-known power is our bulwark.

4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.
5 They saw it, *and* so they marvelled; they were troubled, *and* hasted away.
6 Fear took hold upon them there, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.
7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.
8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

4. "*The kings were assembled, they passed by together.*" They came and they went. No sooner together than scattered. They came one way and fled twenty ways. Boastful the gathering hosts with their royal leaders, despairing the fugitive bands with their astonished captains. They came like foam on the angry sea, like foam they melted away. This was so remarkable that the psalmist puts in a note of exclamation, "*Lo!*" What! have they so suddenly fled! Even thus shall the haters of the church vanish from the field. Papists, Ritualists, Arians, Sceptics, they shall each have their day, and shall pass on to the limbo of forgetfulness.

5. "*They saw it, and so they marvelled.*" They came, they saw, but they did not conquer. There was no *veni, vidi, vici* for them. No sooner did they perceive that the Lord was in the Holy City, than they took to their heels. Before the Lord came to blows with them, they were faint-hearted, and beat a retreat. "*They were troubled and hasted away.*" The troublers were troubled. Their haste in coming was nothing to their hurry in going. Panic seized them, horses were not fleet enough; they would have borrowed the wings of the wind. They fled ignominiously, like children in a fright. Glory be to God, it shall be even thus with the foes of his church; when the Lord cometh

to our help, our enemies shall be as nothing. Could they foresee their ignominious defeat, they would not advance to the attack.

6. "*Fear took hold upon them there.*" They were in Giant Despair's grip. Where they hoped to triumph, there they quivered with dismay. They did not take the city, but fear took hold on them. "*And pain, as of a woman in travail.*" They were as much overcome as a woman whose fright causes premature delivery; or, as full of pain as a poor mother in her pangs—a strong expression, commonly employed by Orientals to set forth the extremity of anguish. When the Lord arises for the help of his church, the proudest of his foes shall be as trembling women, and their dismay shall be but the beginning of eternal defeat.

7. "*Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*" As easily as vessels are driven to shipwreck, dost thou overturn the most powerful adversaries; or it may mean the strength of some nations lies in their ships, whose wooden walls are soon broken; but our strength is in our God, and therefore, it fails not; or there may be another meaning, though thou art our defence, yet thou takest vengeance on our inventions, and while thou dost preserve us, yet our ships, our comforts, our earthly ambitions, are taken from us that we may look alone to thee. God is seen at sea, but he is equally present on land. Speculative heresies, pretending to bring us wealth from afar, are constantly assailing the church, but the breath of the Lord soon drives them to destruction. The church too often relies on the wisdom of men, and these human helps are soon shipwrecked; yet the church itself is safe beneath the care of her God and King.

8. "*As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.*" Our father's stories are reproduced before our very eyes. We heard the promise, and we have seen the fulfilment. The records of Zion, wonderful as they are, are proved to be truthful, because present facts are in perfect harmony therewith. Note how the Lord is first spoken of as *Lord of hosts*, a name of power and sovereignty, and then as *our God*, a name of covenant relation and condescension. No wonder that since the Lord bears both titles, we find him dealing with us after the precedents of his lovingkindness, and the faithfulness of his promises. "*God will establish it for ever.*" The true church can never be disestablished. That which kings establish can last for time only, that which God establishes endures to all eternity. "*Selah.*" Here is a fit place to pause, viewing the past with admiration, and the future with confidence.

9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

10 According to thy name, O God, so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

9. "*We have thought.*" Holy men are thoughtful men; they do not suffer God's wonders to pass before their eyes and melt into forgetfulness, but they meditate deeply upon them. "*Of thy lovingkindness, O God.*" What a delightful subject! Devout minds never tire of so divine a theme. It is well to think of past lovingkindness in times of trial, and equally profitable to remember it in seasons of prosperity. Grateful memories sweeten sorrows and sober joys. "*In the midst of thy temple.*" Fit place for so devout a meditation. Where God is most seen he is best loved. The assembled saints constitute a living temple, and our deepest musings when so gathered together should have regard to the lovingkindness of the Lord, exhibited in the varied experiences of each of the living stones. Memories of mercy should be associated with continuance of praise. Hard by the table of shew-bread commemorating his bounty, should stand the altar of incense denoting our praise.

Verse 10. "*According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth.*" Great fame is due to his great name. The glory of Jehovah's exploits overleaps the boundaries of earth; angels behold with wonder, and from every star delighted intelligences proclaim his fame beyond the ends of the earth. What if men are silent, yet the woods, and seas, and mountains, with all their countless tribes, and all the unseen spirits that walk them, are full of the divine praise. As in a shell we listen to the murmurs of the sea, so in the convolutions of creation we hear the praises of God. "*Thy right hand is full of righteousness.*" Thy sceptre and thy sword, thy government and thy vengeance, are altogether just. Thy hand is never empty, but full of energy, of bounty, and of equity. Neither saint nor sinner shall find the Lord to be an empty-handed God; he will in both cases deal out righteousness to the full: to the one, through Jesus, he will be just to forgive, to the other just to condemn.

11. "*Let mount Zion rejoice.*" As the first of the cities of Judah, and the main object of the enemies' attack, let her lead the song. "*Let the daughters of Judah be glad,*" let the smaller towns join the chorus, for they join in the common victory. Let the women, who fare worst in the havoc of war, be among the gladdest of the glad, now that the spoilers have fled. All the church, and each individual member, should rejoice in the Lord, and magnify his name. "*Because of thy judgments.*" The righteous acts of the Lord are legitimate subjects for joyful praise. However it may appear on earth, yet in heaven the eternal ruin of the wicked will be the theme of adoring song. Rev. xix. 1, 3: "Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Justice which to our poor optics now seems severe, will then be perceived to be perfectly consistent with God's name of love, and to be one of the brightest jewels of his crown.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

14 For this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death.

12. "*Walk about Zion;*" often beat her bounds, even as Israel marched around Jericho. With leisurely and careful inspection survey her. "*And go round about her.*" Encircle her again and again with loving perambulations. We cannot too frequently or too deeply consider the origin, privileges, history, security, and glory of the church. Some subjects deserve but a passing thought; this is worthy of the most patient consideration. "*Tell the towers thereof.*" See if any of them have crumbled, or have been demolished. Is the church of God what she was in doctrine, in strength and in beauty? Her foes counted her towers in envy first, and then in terror, let us count them with sacred exultation. The city of Lucerne, encircled by its ancient walls, adorned with a succession of towers, is a visible illustration of this figure; and as we have gone around it, and paused at each picturesque tower, we have realised the loving lingering inspection which the metaphor implies.

13. "*Mark ye well her bulwarks.*" Consider most attentively how strong are her ramparts, how safely her inhabitants are entrenched behind successive lines of defence. The security of the people of God is not a doctrine to be kept in the background, it may be safely taught, and frequently pondered; only to base hearts will that glorious truth prove harmful; the sons of perdition make a stumbling stone even of the Lord Jesus himself, it is little wonder that they pervert the truth of God concerning the final perseverance of the saints. We are not to turn away from inspecting Zion's ramparts, because

idlers skulk behind them. "*Consider her palaces.*" Examine with care the fair dwellings of the city. Let the royal promises which afford quiet resting places for believers be attentively inspected. See how sound are the defences, and how fair are the pleasaunces of "that ancient citie," of which you are citizens. A man should be best acquainted with his own home; and the church is our dear and blest abode. Would to God professors were more considerate of the condition of the church; so far from telling the towers, some of them scarcely know what or where they are; they are too busy counting their money, and considering their ledgers. Frechold and copyhold, and leasehold, men measure to an inch, but heavenhold and gracehold are too often taken at peradventure, and neglected in sheer heedlessness. "*That ye may tell it to the generation following.*" An excellent reason for studious observation. We have received and we must transmit. We must be students that we may be teachers. The debt we owe to the past we must endeavor to repay by handing down the truth to the future.

14. "*For this God is our God for ever and ever.*" A good reason for preserving a record of all that he has wrought. Israel will not change her God so as to wish to forget, nor will the Lord change so as to make the past mere history. He will be the covenant God of his people world without end. There is no other God, we wish for no other, we would have no other even if other there were. There are some who are so ready to comfort the wicked, that for the sake of ending their punishment they weaken the force of language, and make "*for ever and ever*" mean but a time; nevertheless, despite their interpretations we exult in the hope of an eternity of bliss, and to us "everlasting," and "for ever and ever" mean what they say. "*He will be our guide even unto death.*" Throughout life, and to our dying couch, he will graciously conduct us, and even after death he will lead us to the living fountains of waters. We look to him for resurrection and eternal life. This consolation is clearly derivable from what has gone before; hitherto our foes have been scattered, and our bulwarks have defied attack, for God has been in our midst, therefore all possible assaults in the future shall be equally futile.

"The church has all her foes defied
And laughed to scorn their rage;
E'en thus for aye she shall abide
Secure from age to age."

Farewell, fear. Come hither, graitude and faith, and sing right joyously.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*A Song and Psalm.*" Wherein both voice and instrument were used; the voice began first and the instrument after: and where the inscription is a Psalm and Song, there likely the instrument began and the voice followed.—*John Richardson.*

Whole Psalm.—According to Dr. Lightfoot, the constant and ordinary Psalm for the second day of the week was the forty-eighth.

Verse 1.—"*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God,*" etc. The prophet, being about to praise a certain edifice, commences by praising the architect, and says that in the holy city the wonderful skill and wisdom of God, who built it, is truly displayed. "*Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;*" and so he is, whether we look at his essence, his power, his wisdom, his justice, or his mercy, for all are infinite, everlasting, and incomprehensible; and thus,

so much is God *greatly to be praised*, that all the angels, all men, even all his own works would not suffice thereto; but of all things revealed, there is no one thing can give us a greater idea of his greatness, or for which we should praise and thank him more, than the establishment of his church; and, therefore, the prophet adds, "*in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness;*" that is to say, the greatness of God, and for which he deserves so much praise, is conspicuous in the foundation and construction of his church.—*Robert Bellarmine (Cardinal).*

Verse 1.—"*Great is the Lord.*" Greater, Job xxxiii. 12. Greatest of all, Psalm xcv. 3. Greatness itself, Psalm cxlv. 3. A degree he is above the superlative.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*Mountain of his holiness.*" The religion in it holy, the people in it a holy people.—*William Nicholson.*

Verse 2.—"*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*" What is there, or was there, about Zion to justify the high eulogium of David? The situation is indeed eminently adapted to be the platform of a magnificent citadel. Rising high above the deep valley of Gihon and Hinnom, on the west and south, and the scarcely less deep one of the Cheesemongers on the east, it could only be assailed from the northwest; and then "*on the sides of the north*" it was magnificently beautiful, and fortified by walls, towers, and bulwarks, the wonder and terror of the nations: "*For the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.*" At the thought of it the royal psalmist again bursts forth in triumph: "*Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.*" Alas! her towers have long since fallen to the ground, her bulwarks have been overthrown, her palaces have crumbled to dust, and we who now walk about Zion can tell no other story than this to the generation following.

There is another Zion, however, whose towers are still more glorious, and shall never be overthrown. "*God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*" And "*this God is our God for ever and ever.*" How often is this name synonymous with the church of the living God! and no other spot but one can divide with it the affection of his people—no other name but one can awaken such joyful hopes in the Christian's heart. The temporal Zion is now in the dust, but the true Zion is rising and shaking herself from it, and putting on her beautiful garments to welcome her King when he comes to reign over the whole earth.—*W. M. Thomson, D.D.*

Verse 2.—When I stood that morning on the brow of Olivet, and looked down on the city crowning those battlemented heights, encircled by those deep and dark ravines, I involuntarily exclaimed, "*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*" And as I gazed, the red rays of the rising sun shed a halo round the top of the castle of David; then they tipped with gold each tapering minaret, and gilded each dome of mosque and church, and at length, bathed in one flood of ruddy light the terraced roofs of the city, and the grass and foliage, the cupolas, pavements, and colossal walls of the Haram. No human being could be disappointed who first saw Jerusalem from Olivet.—*J. L. Porter.*

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—*Beautiful in climate*, that is, Mount Zion is situated in a fair and lovely climate. This is the view taken by Montanus and Ainsworth. Bate and Parkhurst read, "*Beautiful in extension, i.e.*, in the prospect which it extends to the eye."—*Editorial Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 2.—"*Beautiful for situation.*" This earth is, by sin, covered with deformity, and therefore justly might that spot of ground, which was thus beautified with holiness, be called "*the joy of the whole earth,*" *i.e.*, what the whole earth had reason to rejoice in, because God would thus in very deed dwell with man upon the earth.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 2.—"*Beautiful for situation.*"

> ————Fair Jerusalem
> The holy city, lifted high her towers,
> And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
> Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
> Of alabaster, topt with golden spires.
>
> *John Milton in "Paradise Regained."*

Verse 2.—"*On the sides of the north.*" Jerusalem, that is the upper and best part of it, was built on the north side of Mount Zion.—*Hadrian Reland*, 1676—1718.

Verse 2.—Jerusalem lay to the north of Sion, and this circumstance is mentioned as a proof of Mount Zion's greater security, for it was almost inaccessible on any other side except the north, and there it was defended by Jerusalem, which was very strong.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 2.—"*The great King.*" God is named the *great King* in opposition to the kings in verse 4.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4.—They were many and powerful: kings and a plurality of them. They were confederate kings. "*The kings were assembled.*" Forces united are the more powerful. But all the endeavours of these confederate kings came to nothing. "*They passed by together*"—together they came, and together they vanished.—*William Nicholson.*

Verses 5, 6.—The potentates of the world saw the miracles of the apostles, the courage and constancy of the martyrs, and the daily increase of the church, notwithstanding all their persecutions; they beheld with astonishment the rapid progress of the faith through the Roman empire; they called upon their gods, but their gods could not help themselves; idolatry expired at the foot of the victorious cross.—*George Horne.*

Verse 6.—"*Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.*" Nothing is more unaccountable than panic. No man, no body of men can adequately guard against such terror. He who made the ears can easily make them to tingle. He who holds the winds in his fist, can easily make them whisper alarm, or roar dismay. This is specially to be expected when men so act as to have their own conscience against them. Job xv. 21. But God can at any time so forsake men as that they shall be unmanned, and play the fool exceedingly. Lev. xxvi. 36. Men have fought bravely several battles, and then played the coward.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*" It is only by her Lord that the church gained "the true riches;" when she enters into traffick with the world, she takes the means of the world for her resources; and when she trusts in her wealth, in her political power, in earthly cunning, to make merchandise, the instruments she adopts come to nothing in her hands, and leave her helpless and poor.—*From "A Plain Commentary on the Book of Psalms (The Prayer Book Version), chiefly founded on the Fathers,"* 1859.

Verse 7.—"*With an east wind,*" which, in Judea, is a very violent and destructive wind. Kennicot renders the verse thus, "*As the east wind dasheth in pieces the ships of Tarshish;*" founding his conjecture upon the similarity in form of two Hebrew letters, signifying the one *in*, the other *as.*—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 9.—"*We have thought.*" The Hebrew דּוּם and דָּמַם and דָּמָה belong all to the same signification, of *quiet*, *rest*, *silence*, *patient expecting*, *thinking*, *considering*, and must be determined to any of these senses by the context. And here that of *expecting* or *patient waiting*, with *affiance* in him, and without all *distrust* or *repining* at his *delays*, seems to be most proper for it. For coming

to the sanctuary to pray for mercy, 'tis most agreeable to say *we wait for it there*, as in the place where he hath promised to afford it, in return to *prayers*.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verses 12, 13.—In a spiritual sense *the towers* and *bulwarks* of Sion are those doctrines of the true faith, which are the strength and glory of the church, which are to be maintained in their soundness and stability against the assaults of heretical teachers, so that they may be transmitted unimpaired to following generations.—*Origen and Theodoret, quoted by Wordsworth.*

Verse 13.—"*Mark ye well her bulwarks.*" Margin as in the Hebrew, "*Set your heart to her bulwarks.*" That is, pay close attention to them; make the investigation with care, not as one does whose heart is not in the thing, and who does it negligently. The word rendered "*bulwarks*," חֵיל, *khail*—means properly, a host or army, and then a fortification or entrenchment, especially the *ditch* or *trench*, with the low wall or breastwork which surrounds it. 2 Sam. xx. 15; Isaiah xxvi. 1. (Gesenius, *Lex.*)—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 13.—"*Mark ye well:*" *set your heart*, mind earnestly, set your affections on.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 13.—"*Her bulwarks.*" I. The designation and constitution of Jesus Christ to be King of the church, King of Zion, is the great bulwark of Zion. II. The second bulwark of Zion is the promises of God, which are innumerable. III. The watchful providence of God over the church. IV. Another bulwark is God's special presence. God is in a special manner present in his church. V. The last bulwark unto which all others may be reduced, is the covenant of God: "For this God is our God."—*John Owen.*

Verse 14.—"*This God is our God for ever and ever.*" What a portion then is that of the believer! The landlord cannot say of his fields, these are mine for ever and ever. The king cannot say of his crown, this is mine for ever and ever. These possessions shall soon change masters; these possessors shall soon mingle with the dust, and even the graves they shall occupy may not long be theirs; but it is the singular, the supreme happiness of every Christian to say, or to have a right to say, "This glorious God with all his divine perfections is my God, for ever and ever, and even death itself shall not separate me from his love."—*George Burder.*

Verse 14.—"*This God is our God.*" The people of God are sometime represented as so taken with this apprehension of their peculiar relation to God, that they cannot be content to know, but they proclaim it; nor was it enough the present age should know, but they must have it told the following generation: "Let Mount Zion rejoice," etc. Mark, "That ye may tell the generation following," "*For this is our God.*" See their ostentation of him! This God; *q.d.*, Behold what a God have we! view him well, and take notice how glorious a God he is. And as they glory in the greatness of the God to whom they were related, so they do in the eternity of the relation. "This God is our God *for ever and ever.*"—*John Howe.*

Verse 14.—God is not only a satisfying portion, filling every crevice of thy soul with the light of joy and comfort; and a sanctifying portion, elevating thy soul to its primitive and original perfection; and a universal portion; not health, or wealth, or friends, or honours, or liberty, or life, or house, or wife, or child, or pardon, or peace, or grace, or glory, or earth, or heaven, but all these, and infinitely more, but also he is an eternal portion. This God would be thy God "*for ever and ever.*" Oh, sweet word *ever!* thou art the crown of the saints' crown, and the glory of their glory. Their portion is so full that they desire no more; they enjoy variety and plenty of delights above what they are able to ask or think, and want nothing but to have it fixed. May they but possess it in peace without interruption or cessation, they will trample all kingdoms of the earth as dirt under their feet; and lo! thou art the welcome

dove to bring this olive branch in thy mouth. "*This God is our God for ever and ever.*" All the arithmetical figures of days, and months, and years, and ages, are nothing to this infinite cipher *ever*, which, though it stand for nothing in the vulgar account, yet contains all our millions; yea, our millions and millions of millions are less than drops to this ocean *ever.*—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 14.—Some expositors have strangely found a difficulty in the last verse, deeming such a profession of personal faith an inappropriate termination for a national song. Even Dr. Delitzsch, a wise and devout interpreter, shares in this notion; going, indeed, so far as to throw out the surmise, that some word must have been lost from the Hebrew text. To me it seems that the verse, as it stands, is admirably in harmony with the song, and is its crowning beauty. When the Lord does great things for church or nation, he means that all the faithful, however humble their station, should take courage from it, should repose in him fresh confidence, and cling to him with a firmer hope, and say, "*This God shall be our God for ever; he will guide us even unto death.*"—*William Binnie.*

Verse 14.—"*Unto death,*" or as some explain it, *at death*, *i.e.*, he will save us from it; others, *over death*, beyond it. But the most obvious explanation, and the one most agreeable to usage, is that which makes the phrase mean even to the end of life, or as long as we live. The idea of a future state, though not expressed, is not excluded.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 14 (*last clause*).—The last clause is much misunderstood. It is not, "Our guide *unto* death," for the words are, יַנְהֲגֵנוּ עַל־מוּת "shall lead us *over* death." Surely it means, "It is he who leads over *death* to *resurrection*"—over Jordan to Canaan. The עַל is used in Levit. xv. 25, for "*beyond*," in regard to time, and is not this the sense here? "*Beyond* the time of death"? Till death is to us over? Till we have *stood upon the grave of death?* Yes; he it is who leads us on to this last victory; he swallows up death in victory, and leads us to *trample on death.* And so viewed, we easily discern the beautiful link of thought that joins this Psalm to that which follows. Such is the celebration of *The Mighty One become the glory of Jerusalem.*—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

[*All the suggestions under this Psalm, except those otherwise designated, are by our beloved friend, Rev. George Rogers, Tutor of the Pastors' College.*]

Verse 1.—I. *What the church is to God.* 1. His "*city:*" not a lawless rabble, but a well organised community. 2. A mountain of holiness, for the display of justifying righteousness, of sanctifying grace. II. *What God is to the church.* 1. Its inhabitant. It is *his* city, his mountain. There he is great. There was no room for the whole of God in Paradise, there is no room for him in his law, no room for him in the heaven of angels: in the church only is there room for all his perfections, for a triune Jehovah. Great everywhere, he is peculiarly great here. 2. The object of its praises. As he is greatest here, so are his praises, and through the universe on this account.

Verse 2.—I. *Was the ancient Zion beautiful for situation?* So is the New Testament church founded upon a rock, upon eternal purpose and grace. II. *Was it the joy of the whole earth?* So the New Testament church will become. III. *Was it the special joy of the tribes of Israel* that were almost entirely to the north of Jerusalem? So the church is to the saints. IV. *Was it a royal as well as holy city?* So is the church. "Yet have I set," etc.

Verse 3.—I. God is a refuge in his church. The church is a city of refuge, but the refuge is not in its church, but its God. 1. For sinners from wrath. 2

For saints from trials and fears. II. God is there known as such, known to thousands, not known as such elsewhere. "They that know thy name," etc.

Verses 4—7.—The opposition of worldly powers to the church. "The kings," etc. II. The manner in which they are subdued—by their own fears; conscience has persecuted those who have persecuted the church of God. They who have seized the ark of God have been glad to return it with an offering. III. The completeness of their overthrow. As a fleet of ships of Tarshish, dispersed, broken, and engulfed by the east wind.

Verse 8.—I. God has ever been to his people what he now is; the same "*heard*" as "*seen.*" II. He is now what he ever has been: the same "*seen*" as "*heard.*" III. He will ever be what he now is. "Will establish it for ever."

Verse 9.—I. What are the lovingkindnesses of God? Pity to the wretched, pardon to the penitent, help to the prayerful, comfort to the afflicted, etc. II. Where are they to be found? "In the midst of," etc. 1. Here they are revealed. 2. Here they are dispensed. 3. Here they are sought. 4. Here they are enjoyed.

Verse 10.—As the name of God, so his praises are—I. Supreme. II. Unqualified. III. Universal. IV. Everlasting.

Verse 10.—"*Thy right hand,*" etc. I. The justice of omnipotence. II. Omnipotence controlled by justice. III. The omnipotence of justice.

Verse 11.—I. The subjects of his peoples' joy. Not mercies merely, but judgments. II. Reasons: 1. Because they are holy—needful to the purity of moral government. 2. Just—needful to vindicate law. 3. Good—needful for the greatest amount of good.

Verse 12.—I. What is to be understood by the preservation and protection of the church? II. What is meant by searching into, and considering of, these causes and means of the church's preservation? III. What are those causes and means of the church's preservation, those towers and bulwarks which will not fail? IV. What reason is there why we should thus search into and consider these causes of the church's preservation and protection? V. What is the testimony which we have to give concerning this matter to the ensuing generation?—*John Owen's Sermon.*

Verse 14 (*first clause*).—This is the language of a *proprietary* in God: 1. Of an *assured* proprietary—"This God is *our* God." 2. Of a *permanent* proprietary—"*for ever and ever.*" 3. Of an *exulting* proprietary.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 14.—I. The language of discrimination. *This* God. *This* God in Christ, in the church. II. The language of Faith—*our* God. III. Of Hope—"*For ever and ever.*" IV. Of Resignation—"*He will be our guide,*" etc.

PSALM XLIX.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician, a Psalm for the sons of Korah. *This is precisely the same as on former occasions, and no remark is needed.*

DIVISION.—*The poet musician sings, to the accompaniment of his harp, the despicable character of those who trust in their wealth, and so he consoles the oppressed believer. The first four verses are a preface; from* 5 *to* 12 *all fear of great oppressors is removed by the remembrance of their end and their folly;* 13 *contains an expression of wonder at the perpetuity of folly;* 14 *and* 15 *contrast the ungodly and the righteous in their future; and from* 16 *to* 20 *the lesson from the whole is given in an admonitory form. Note the chorus in verses* 12 *and* 20, *and also the two Selahs.*

EXPOSITION.

HEAR this, all *ye* people; give ear, all *ye* inhabitants of the world:

2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.

4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

In these four verses the poet-prophet calls universal humanity to listen to his didactic hymn.

1. "*Hear this, all ye people.*" All men are concerned in the subject, it is *of* them, and therefore *to* them that the psalmist would speak. It is not a topic which men delight to consider, and therefore he who would instruct them must press them to give ear. Where, as in this case, the theme claims to be wisdom and understanding, attention is very properly demanded; and when the style combines the sententiousness of the proverb with the sweetness of poesy, interest is readily excited. "*Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.*" "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Men dwelling in all climes are equally concerned in the subject, for the laws of providence are the same in all lands. It is wise for each one to feel I am a man, and therefore everything which concerns mortals has a personal interest to me. We must all appear before the judgment-seat, and therefore we all should give earnest heed to holy admonition which may help us to prepare for that dread event. He who refuses to receive instruction by the ear, will not be able to escape receiving destruction by it when the Judge shall say, "Depart, ye cursed."

2. "*Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*" Sons of great men, and children of mean men, men of large estate, and ye who pine in poverty, ye are all bidden to hear the inspired minstrel as he touches his harp to a mournful but instructive lay. The low will be encouraged, the high will be warned, the rich will be sobered, the poor consoled, there will be a useful lesson for each if they are willing to learn it. Our preaching ought to have a voice for all classes, and all should have an ear for it. To suit our word to the rich alone is wicked sycophancy, and to aim only at pleasing the poor is to act the part of a demagogue. Truth may be so spoken as to command the ear of all, and wise men seek to learn that acceptable style. Rich and poor must soon meet together in the grave, they may well be content to meet together now. In the congregation of the dead all differences of rank will be obliterated, they ought not now to be obstructions to united instructions.

3. "*My mouth shall speak of wisdom.*" Inspired and therefore lifted beyond himself, the prophet is not praising his own attainments, but extolling the

divine Spirit which spoke in him. He knew that the Spirit of truth and wisdom spoke through him. He who is not sure that his matter is good has no right to ask a hearing. "*And the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*" The same Spirit who made the ancient seers eloquent, also made them thoughtful. The help of the Holy Ghost was never meant to supersede the use of our own mental powers. The Holy Spirit does not make us speak as Balaam's ass, which merely uttered sounds, but never meditated; but he first leads us to consider and reflect, and then he gives us the tongue of fire to speak with power.

4. "*I will incline mine ear to a parable.*" He who would have others hear, begins by hearing himself. As the minstrel leans his ear to his harp, so must the preacher give his whole soul to his ministry. The truth came to the psalmist as a parable, and he endeavoured to unriddle it for popular use; he would not leave the truth in obscurity, but he listened to its voice till he so well understood it as to be able to interpret and translate it into the common language of the multitude. Still of necessity it would remain a problem, and a dark saying to the unenlightened many, but this would not be the songster's fault, for, saith he, "*I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*" The writer was no mystic, delighting in deep and cloudy things, yet he was not afraid of the most profound topics; he tried to open the treasures of darkness, and to uplift pearls from the deep. To win attention he cast his proverbial philosophy into the form of song, and tuned his harp to the solemn tone of his subject. Let us gather round the minstrel of the King of kings, and hear the Psalm which erst was led by the chief musician, as the chorus of the sons of Korah lifted up their voices in the temple.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

7 None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

9 That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

10 For he seeth *that* wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

11 Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts *that* perish.

5. "*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*" The man of God looks calmly forward to dark times when those evils which have dogged his heels shall gain a temporary advantage over him. Iniquitous men, here called in the abstract *iniquity*, lie in wait for the righteous, as serpents that aim at the heels of travellers: the iniquity of our heels is that evil which aims to trip us up or impede us. It was an old prophecy that the serpent should wound the heel of the woman's seed, and the enemy of our souls is diligent to fulfil that premonition. In some dreary part of our road it may be that evil will wax stronger and bolder, and gaining upon us will openly assail us; those who followed at our heels like a pack of wolves, may perhaps overtake us, and compass us about. What then? Shall we yield to cowardice? Shall we be a prey to their teeth? God forbid. Nay, we will not

even fear, for what are these foes? What indeed, but mortal men who shall perish and pass away? There can be no real ground of alarm to the faithful. Their enemies are too insignificant to be worthy of one thrill of fear. Doth not the Lord say to us, "I, even I, am he that comforteth thee; who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?"

Scholars have given other renderings of this verse, but we prefer to keep to the authorised version when we can, and in this case we find in it precisely the same meaning which those would give to it who translate "*my heels*," by the words, "*my supplanters.*"

6. What if the good man's foes be among the great ones of the earth! yet he need not fear them. "*They that trust in their wealth.*" Poor fools, to be content with such a rotten confidence. When we set our rock in contrast with theirs, it would be folly to be afraid of them. Even though they are loud in their brags, we can afford to smile. What if they glory "*and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches?*" yet while we glory in our God we are not dismayed by their proud threatenings. Great strength, position, and estate, make wicked men very lofty in their own esteem, and tyrannical towards others; but the heir of heaven is not overawed by their dignity, nor cowed by their haughtiness. He sees the small value of riches, and the helplessness of their owners in the hour of death, and therefore he is not so mean as to be afraid of an ephemera, a moth, a bubble.

7. "*None of them can by any means redeem his brother.*" With all their riches, the whole of them put together could not rescue a comrade from the chill grasp of death. They boast of what they will do with us, let them see to themselves. Let them weigh their gold in the scales of death, and see how much they can buy therewith from the worm and the grave. The poor are their equals in this respect; let them love their friend ever so dearly, they cannot "*give to God a ransom for him.*" A king's ransom would be of no avail, a Monte Rosa of rubies, an America of silver, a world of gold, a sun of diamonds, would all be utterly contemned. O ye boasters, think not to terrify us with your worthless wealth, go ye and intimidate death before ye threaten men in whom is immortality and life.

8. "*For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*" Too great is the price, the purchase is hopeless. For ever must the attempt to redeem a soul with money remain a failure. Death comes and wealth cannot bribe him; hell follows, and no golden key can unlock its dungeon. Vain, then, are your threatenings, ye possessors of the yellow clay; your childish toys are despised by men who estimate the value of possessions by the shekel of the sanctuary.

9. No price could secure for any man "*That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*" Mad are men now after gold, what would they be if it could buy the elixir of immortality? Gold is lavished out of the bag to cheat the worm of the poor body by embalming it, or enshrining it in a coffin of lead, but it is a miserable business, a very burlesque and comedy. As for the soul, it is too subtle a thing to be detained when it hears the divine command to soar through tracks unknown. Never, therefore, will we fear those base nibblers at our heels, whose boasted treasure proves to be so powerless to save.

10. "*For he seeth that wise men die.*" Every one sees this. The proud persecuting rich man cannot help seeing it. He cannot shut his eyes to the fact that wiser men than he are dying, and that he also, with all his craft, must die. "*Likewise the fool and the brutish person perish.*" Folly has no immunity from death. Off goes the jester's cap, as well as the student's gown. Jollity cannot laugh off the dying hour; death who visits the university, does not spare the tavern. Thoughtlessness and brutishness meet their end as surely as much care and wasting study. In fact, while the truly wise, so far as this world is concerned, *die*, the fool has a worse lot, for he *perishes*, is blotted out of remembrance, bewailed by none, remembered no more. "*And leave their wealth*

to others." Not a farthing can they carry with them. Whether heirs male of their own body, lawfully begotten, inherit their estates, or they remain unclaimed, it matters not, their hoardings are no longer theirs ; friends may quarrel over their property, or strangers divide it as spoil, they cannot interfere. Ye boasters, hold ye your own, before ye dream of despoiling the sons of the living God. Keep shoes to your own feet in death's dark pilgrimage, ere ye seek to bite our heels.

11. "*Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations.*" He is very foolish who is more a fool in his inmost thought than he dare be in his speech. Such rotten fruit, rotten at the core, are worldlings. Down deep in their hearts, though they dare not say so, they fancy that earthly goods are real and enduring. Foolish dreamers ! The frequent dilapidations of their castles and manor-houses should teach them better, but still they cherish the delusion. They cannot tell the mirage from the true streams of water ; they fancy rainbows to be stable, and clouds to be the everlasting hills. "*They call their lands after their own names.*" Common enough is this practice. His grounds are made to bear the groundling's name, he might as well write it on the water. Men have even called countries by their own names, but what are they the better for the idle compliment, even if men perpetuate their nomenclature ?

12. "*Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not.*" He is but a lodger for the hour, and does not stay a night : even when he dwells in marble halls his notice to quit is written out. Eminence is evermore in imminence of peril. The hero of the hour lasts but for an hour. Sceptres fall from the paralysed hands which once grasped them, and coronets slip away from skulls when the life is departed. "*He is like the beasts that perish.*" He is not like the sheep which are preserved of the Great Shepherd, but like the hunted beast which is doomed to die. He lives a brutish life and dies a brutish death. Wallowing in riches, surfeited with pleasure, he is fatted for the slaughter, and dies like the ox in the shambles. Alas ! that so noble a creature should use his life so unworthily, and end it so disgracefully. So far as this world is concerned, wherein does the death of many men differ from the death of a dog ? They go down—

> "To the vile dust from whence they sprung,
> Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung."

What room is there, then, for fear to the godly when such natural brute beasts assail them ? Should they not in patience possess their souls ?

We make a break here, because this stanza appears to be the refrain of the song, and as such is repeated in the twentieth verse.

13 This their way *is* their folly : yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

13. Their vain confidences are not casual aberrations from the path of wisdom, but *their way*, their usual and regular course ; their whole life is regulated by such principles. Their life-path is essential *folly*. They are fools ingrain. From first to last brutishness is their characteristic, grovelling stupidity the leading trait of their conduct. "*Yet their posterity approve their sayings.*" Those who follow them in descent follow them in folly, quote their worldly maxims, and accept their mad career as the most prudent mode of life. Why do they not see by their fathers' failure their fathers' folly ? No, the race transmits its weakness. Grace is not hereditary, but sordid worldliness goes from generation to generation. The race of fools never dies out. No need of missionaries to teach men to be earthworms, they crawl naturally to the dust. "*Selah.*" Well may the minstrel pause, and bid us muse upon the deep-seated madness of the sons of Adam. Take occasion, reader, to reflect upon thine own.

14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave ; death shall feed on

them ; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning ; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave ; for he shall receive me. Selah.

14. "*Like sheep they are laid in the grave.*" As dumb driven cattle, they are hurried to their doom, and are penned in within the gates of destruction. As sheep that go whither they are driven, and follow their leader without thought, so these men who have chosen to make this world their all, are urged on by their passions, till they find themselves at their journey's end, that end the depths of Hades. Or if we keep to our own translation, we have the idea of their dying peaceably, and being buried in quiet, only that they may wake up to be ashamed at the last great day. "*Death shall feed on them.*" Death like a grim shepherd leads them on, and conducts them to the place of their eternal pasturage, where all is barrenness and misery. The righteous are led by the Good Shepherd, but the ungodly have death for their shepherd, and he drives them onward to hell. As the power of death rules them in this world, for they have not passed from death unto life, so the terrors of death shall devour them in the world to come. As grim giants, in old stories, are said to feed on men whom they entice to their caves, so death, the monster, feeds on the flesh and blood of the mighty. "*The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*" The poor saints were once the tail, but at the day-break they shall be the head. Sinners rule till night-fall ; their honours wither in the evening, and in the morning they find their position utterly reversed. The sweetest reflection to the upright is that "the morning" here intended begins an endless, changeless, day. What a vexation of spirit to the proud worldling, when the Judge of all the earth holds his morning session, to see the man whom he despised, exalted high in heaven, while he himself is cast away ! "*And their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.*" Whatever of glory the ungodly had shall disappear in the tomb. Form and comeliness shall vanish from them, the worm shall make sad havoc of all their beauty. Even their last dwelling place, the grave, shall not be able to protect the relics committed to it ; their bodies shall dissolve, no trace shall remain of all their strong limbs and lofty heads, no vestige of remaining beauty shall be discoverable. The beauty of the righteous is not yet revealed, it waits its manifestations ; but all the beauty the wicked will ever have is in full bloom in this life ; it will wither, fade, decay, rot, and utterly pass away. Who, then, would envy or fear the proud sinner ?

15. "*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.*" Forth from that temporary resting-place we shall come in due time, quickened by divine energy. Like our risen Head we cannot be holden by the bands of the grave ; redemption has emancipated us from the slavery of death. No redemption could man find in riches, but God has found it in the blood of his dear Son. Our Elder Brother has given to God a ransom, and we are the redeemed of the Lord : because of this redemption by price we shall assuredly be redeemed by power out of the hand of the last enemy. "*For he shall receive me.*" He shall take me out of the tomb, take me up to heaven. If it is not said of me as of Enoch, "He was not, for God took him," yet shall I reach the same glorious state. My spirit God will receive, and my body shall sleep in Jesus till, being raised in his image, it shall also be received into glory. How infinitely superior is such a hope to anything which our oppressors can boast ! Here is something which will bear meditation, and therefore again let us pause, at the bidding of the musician, who inserts a "*Selah.*"

16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased ;

17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

20 Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts *that* perish.

16. In these last verses the psalmist becomes a preacher, and gives admonitory lessons which he has himself gathered from experience. "*Be not thou afraid when one is made rich.*" Let it not give thee any concern to see the godless prosper. Raise no questions as to divine justice; suffer no foreboding to cloud thy mind. Temporal prosperity is too small a matter to be worth fretting about; let the dogs have their bones, and the swine their draff. "*When the glory of his house is increased.*" Though the sinner and his family are in great esteem, and stand exceedingly high, never mind; all things will be righted in due time. Only those whose judgment is worthless will esteem men the more because their lands are broader; those who are highly estimated for such unreasonable reasons will find their level ere long, when truth and righteousness come to the fore.

17. "*For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away.*" He has but a leasehold of his acres, and death ends his tenure. Through the river of death man must pass naked. Not a rag of all his raiment, not a coin of all his treasure, not a jot of all his honour, can the dying worldling carry with him. Why then fret ourselves about so fleeting a prosperity? "*His glory shall not descend after him.*" As he goes down, down, down for ever, none of his honours or possessions will follow him. Patents of nobility are invalid in the sepulchre. His worship, his honour, his lordship, and his grace, will alike find their titles ridiculous in the tomb. Hell knows no aristocracy. Your dainty and delicate sinners shall find that eternal burnings have no respect for their affectations and refinements.

18. "*Though while he lived he blessed his soul.*" He pronounced himself happy. He had his good things in this life. His chief end and aim were to bless himself. He was charmed with the adulations of flatterers. "*Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.*" The generality of men worship success, however it may be gained. The colour of the winning horse is no matter; it is the winner, and that is enough. "Take care of Number One," is the world's proverbial philosophy, and he who gives good heed to it is "a clever fellow," "a fine man of business," "a shrewd common-sense tradesman," "a man with his head put on the right way." Get money, and you will be "respectable," "a substantial man," and your house will be "an eminent firm in the city," or "one of our best county families." To do good wins fame in heaven, but to do good *to yourself* is the prudent thing among men of the world. Yet not a whisper of worldly congratulation can follow the departing millionaire; they say he died worth a mint of money, but what charm has that fact to the dull cold ear of death? The banker rots as fast as the shoeblack, and the peer becomes as putrid as the pauper. Alas! poor wealth, thou art but the rainbow colouring of the bubble, the tint which yellows the morning mist, but adds no substance to it.

18. "*He shall go to the generation of his fathers.*" Where the former generations lie, the present shall also slumber. The sires beckon to their sons to come to the same land of forgetfulness. Mortal fathers beget not immortal children. As our ancestors have departed, so also must we. "*They shall never see light.*" To this upper region the dead worldling shall never return again to possess his estates, and enjoy his dignities. Among the dead he must lie in the thick darkness, where no joy or hope can come to him. Of all his treasures there remains not enough to furnish him one poor candle; the blaze

of his glory is out for ever, and not a spark remains to cheer him. How then can we look with fear or envy upon a wretch doomed to such unhappiness?

20. The song ends with the refrain, "*Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*" Understanding differences men from animals, but if they will not follow the highest wisdom, and like beasts find their all in this life, then their end shall be as mean and dishonourable as that of beasts slain in the chase, or killed in the shambles. From the loftiest elevation of worldly honour to the uttermost depth of death is but a step. Saddest of all is the reflection, that though men are like beasts in all the degradation of perishing, yet not in the rest which animal perishing secures, for, alas! it is written, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

So ends the minstrel's lay. Comforting as the theme is to the righteous, it is full of warning to the worldly. Hear ye it, O ye rich and poor. Give ear to it, ye nations of the earth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Strange it is that two Psalms so near together, as this and the forty-fifth should, and should alone imitate, or be the forerunners of, two works of David's son; this—Ecclesiastes, the former—the Canticles.—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 2.—In this Psalm David, as it were, summons and divides mankind. In the first verse he summons: "*Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.*" In the second verse he divides: "*Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*" The word in the Hebrew for "*high*" is בְּנֵי אִישׁ, *bene ish, sons of Ish*, and the word for "*low*" is בְּנֵי אָדָם *bene Adam, sons of Adam.* If we should translate the text directly, according to the letter, the words must run, *sons of men and sons of men;* for, sons of *Adam* and sons of *Ish* are both translated *sons of men.* Yet when they are set together in a way of opposition, the one signifieth "*low*" and the other "*high;*" and so our translators render it according to the sense, not sons of men and sons of men, but "*low*" and "*high.*" Junius translates to this sense, though in more words, as well they who are born of mean men, as they who are born of the honourable.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—"*I will incline mine ear to a parable,*" *i.e.*, I will diligently attend, that I may not sing anything ungracefully; a metaphor taken from musicians who bring their ear close to the harp, that they may ascertain the harmony of the sound.—*Victorinus Bythner.*

Verse 5.—"*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*" Those that are full of years are approaching the nearer to their happiness. They have finished their voyage, and now are in sight of the haven. Nature's provision is spent, her stock is exhausted, and now the good man doth not so much descend as fall into the grave, and from thence he rises to heaven and eternal bliss. And shall he be disturbed at this? shall he be afraid to be made happy? If I mistake not, this is the meaning of the psalmist's words. They are generally interpreted concerning *his ways* in general, but they seem to me to refer particularly to the calamity which his old age was incident to: for "*the days of evil*" are old age, and are so called by the wise man (Eccl. xii. 1); and as the "*heel*" is the extreme part of the body, so it is here applied to the last part of man's life, his declining age; and "*iniquity*" (as the word is sometimes used among the Hebrews) signifies here penal evil, and denotes the infirmities and decays of the concluding part of a man's life. So that the true meaning of the psalmist's words is this—I will not now in my last days be dejected with fear and trouble of

mind, for I am coming towards my happiness, my declining years shall deliver me up to death, and that shall consign me to everlasting life. This certainly is matter of joy rather than of fear. For this reason I account my last days to be the most eligible part of my whole life.—*John Edwards, D.D.* (1637—1716), *in "Theologia Reformata."*

Verse 5.—"*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*" That is, when my sins or failings in what I have done, come to my remembrance, or are chastened upon me. Every man's heels hath some iniquity: as we shall have some dirt cleaving to our heels while we walk in a dirty world, so there is some dirt, some defilement, upon all our actions, which we may call, *the iniquity of our heel.—Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5.—"*When the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*" With Bishop Lowth, the celebrated Michaelis, Bishop Hare, and a host of other critics, I decidedly incline to the idea, that עֲקֵבַי, rendered "*my heels*" is to be regarded as the present participle of the verb עָקַב, *to supplant, to act deceitfully, to deceive, to hold one by the heel*, etc., etc. If this be correct, then the proper translation will be :—

Wherefore should I fear in the days of adversity,
The iniquity of my supplanters who surround me?

The Syriac and Arabic read, as does also Dr. Kennicott :—

Why should I fear in the evil day,
When the iniquity of my enemies compasses me about?

John Morison.

Verses 5—9.

Why should I fear the evil hour,
When ruthless foes in ambush lie,
Who revel in their pride of power,
And on their hoarded wealth rely?

A brother's ransom who can pay,
Or alter God's eternal doom?
What hand can wrest from death his prey,
Its banquet from the rotten tomb?

From "The Psalter, or Psalms of David, in English verse. By a Member of the University of Cambridge." [*Benjamin Hall Kennedy, D.D.*] 1860.

Verse 6.—"*They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.*" Here we have the rich man trusting and boasting; surely that is very confident trusting which issues itself into boasting! That man is ascended to the highest step of faith in God, who makes his boast of God; such faith have they in fine gold who boast in it.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 6.—"*They that trust in their wealth.*" "The Covetous Man's Soliloquy." Believe me, the times are hard and dangerous; charity is grown cold, and friends uncomfortable; an empty purse is full of sorrow, and hollow bags make a heavy heart. Poverty is a civil pestilence, which frights away both friends and kindred, and leaves us to a "Lord, have mercy upon us." It is a sickness very catching and infectious, and more commonly abhorred than cured. The best antidote against it is Angelica and providence, and the best cordial is *aurum potabile*. Gold-taking fasting is an approved sovereign. Debts are ill humours, and turn at last to dangerous obstructions. Lending is a mere consumption of the radical humour, which, if consumed, brings a patient to nothing. Let others trust to courtiers' promises, to friends' performances, to princes' favours; give me a toy called gold, give me a thing called money. O blessed Mammon, how extremely sweet is thy all-commanding presence to my thriving soul! In banishment thou art my dear companion; in captivity thou art my precious ransom; in trouble and vexation thou art my dainty rest; in sickness thou art my health; in grief my only joy; in all extremity my only trust. Virtue must veil to thee; nay, grace itself, not relished with thy sweetness, would even displease the righteous palates of the sons of men. Come, then, my soul, advise, contrive, project; go,

compass sea and land ; leave no exploit untried, no path untrod, no time unspent ; afford thine eyes no sleep, thy head no rest ; neglect thy ravenous belly, unclothe thy back ; deceive, betray, swear, and forswear, to compass such a friend. If thou be base in birth, it will make thee honourable ; if weak in power, it will make thee formidable. Are thy friends few ? It will make them numerous. Is thy cause bad ? It will gain thee advocates. True, wisdom is an excellent help, in case it bend this way ; and learning is a genteel ornament, if not too chargeable ; yet, by your leave, they are but estates for the term of life : but everlasting gold, if well advantaged, will not only bless thy days, but thy surviving children from generation to generation. Come, come, let others fill their brains with dear-bought wit, turn their pence into expenseful charity, and store their bosoms with unprofitable piety ; let them lose all to save their imaginary consciences, and beggar themselves at home to be thought honest abroad : fill thou thy bags and barns, and lay up for many years, and take thy rest.—*Francis Quarles, in "The Covetous Man's Care."*

Verse 6.—The form of money agreeth well with the condition of it ; for it is stamped round, because it is so apt to run from a man. Fire, thieves, waters, and infinite causes there are of consuming riches, and impoverishing their possessors, though they have even millions and mountains of gold ; but suppose that contrary to their nature they stay by a man, yet cannot *he* stay by them, but must leave them in spite of his teeth, as the psalmist saith (xlix. 17), "The rich man shall take away nothing when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow after him." Thus death makes a violent divorce between the rich man and his goods, when it is said unto him, "Thou fool, this night shall they take away thy soul." The rich man sleeps (saith Job very elegantly), and when he openeth his eyes there is nothing. It fares with a rich man at his death, as it doth with a sleeping man when he wakes out of his dream. A man that dreams of the finding or fruition of some rich booty is wonderful glad, yet when he awaketh he findeth nothing, but seeth it was only a dream, and he is sorry ; so the rich man seemed in the time of his life, to have somewhat, but at the day of his death all vanisheth like the idea of a dream, and it vexeth him.—*J. D., in "The Threefold Resolution,"* 1608.

Verse 6.—Who knocks more boldly at heaven-gate to be let in than they whom Christ will reject as workers of iniquity ? Oh, what delusion is this ! Caligula never made himself more ridiculous than when he would be honoured as a God, while he lived more like a devil. Before you would have others take you for Christians, for God's sake prove yourselves men and not beasts, as you do by your brutish lives. Talk not of your hopes of salvation so long as the marks of damnation are seen upon your flagitious lives. If the way to heaven were thus easy, I promise you the saints in all ages have been much overseen, to take so great pains in mortifying their lusts, in denying to satisfy their sensual appetite. To what purpose did they make so much waste of their sweat in their zealous serving God ? and of their tears that they could serve him no better, if they might have gone to heaven as these men hope to do ? That friar was far more sound in his judgment in this point, who, preaching at Rome one Lent, when some cardinals and many other great ones were present, began his sermon thus abruptly and ironically. Saint Peter was a fool, Saint Paul was a fool, and all the primitive Christians were fools ; for they thought the way to heaven was by prayers and tears, watchings and fastings, severities of mortification, and denying the pomp and glory of this world ; whereas you here in Rome spend your time in balls and masks, live in pomp and pride, lust and luxury, and yet count yourselves good Christians, and hope to be saved ; but at last you will prove the fools, and they will be found to have been the wise men.—*William Gurnall's Funeral Sermon for Lady Mary Vere*, 1671.

Verses 6—10.—David speaks of some "*that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.*" Rich men can do great things, but here is a thing that they cannot do : "*None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.*" From what cannot a rich man

redeem his brother? It is true of spiritual redemption; yea, that is furthest out of the rich man's reach, money will not do it: "We are not redeemed with corrupt things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God." 1 Peter i. 18, 19. But the psalmist speaks of a lower redemption, to which all the riches of man cannot reach: "*None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:*" "*for the redemption of their soul* (that is, of their person from the grave), *is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*" And that he speaks of their redemption from the grave, is more clearly expressed at the ninth verse: "*That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*" Jesus Christ did not so redeem us that we should live for ever, and not see corruption. It was the privilege of Jesus Christ the Redeemer not to see corruption; but Jesus Christ hath not redeemed us that we should not see corruption. He hath redeemed us that we should live for ever in heaven, but he hath not redeemed us from corruption, that we should live for ever on earth, or not see corruption in the grave; for, as it is said in the tenth verse of the Psalm, we see "*that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others;*" as if he had said, Neither the one nor the other sort of men could make this use or improvement of their wealth, to deliver themselves from going to the grave, for if they could they would have laid all out on that purchase; but they could not do it, therefore, "*they leave their wealth to others.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 7.—"*None of them can by any means redeem his brother,*" etc. Some animals devoted to God could be redeemed at a price, but no price could be assigned to the ransom of a soul. That such a ransom was to be provided, the faith of the church had always anticipated: "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Psalm cxxx. 8.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 8.—"*For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*" In this judgment tears will not prevail, prayers will not be heard, promises will not be admitted, repentance will be too late, and as for riches, honourable titles, sceptres, and diadems, these will profit much less, and the inquisition shall be so curious and diligent, that not one light thought, not one idle word (not repented of in thy life past) shall be forgotten, for truth itself hath said, not in jest, but in earnest, of every idle word which men have spoken, they shall give an account in the day of judgment. Oh, how many which now sin with great delight, yea, even with greediness (as if we served a god of wood or of stone which seeth nothing nor can do nothing) will be then astonished, ashamed, and silent. Then shall the days of thy mirth be ended, and thou shalt be overwhelmed with everlasting darkness, and instead of thy pleasures thou shalt have everlasting torments.—*Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 8.—"*For it cost more to redeem their souls: so that he must let that alone forever.*"—*Prayer-book Version.*

Verse 8.—"*It ceaseth for ever.*" That is, wealth for ever comes short of the power necessary to accomplish this. It has always been insufficient; it always *will* be. There is no hope that it *ever* will be sufficient, that by any increase in the amount, or by any change in the conditions of the bargain, property or riches can avail for this. The whole matter is perfectly *hopeless* as to the power of wealth in saving one human being from the grave. It must always *fail* in saving a man from death. The word rendered *ceaseth*—חָדַל, *khadal*, means *to leave off, to desist, to fail.* Gen. xi. 8; Ex. ix. 34; Isa. ii. 22.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 11.—"*Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever.*" This is the interpretation of our actions, when we do not make God our portion, but trust in the abundance of our riches; this is our "*inward thought,*" the saying of our heart, Ye are my god. We do in effect say, Thou art my confidence, my hope, and my joy, and will stand by me when all things cease and

fail, and wilt not suffer me to want, or to be wrong, as long as thou lastest: these are the secret speeches of our hearts. Christians! many may (orator like), declaim against the vanity of the creature, and speak as basely of money as others do, and say, We know it is but a little refined earth; but their hearts close with it, they are loth to part with it for God's sake, or upon God's declared will. As he that speaketh good words of God, is not said to trust in God; so speaking bad words of worldly riches doth not exempt us from trusting them. There is a difference between declaiming as an orator, and acting like a Christian.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 11.—"*Their inward thought.*" If *good* thoughts be thy *deep* thoughts, if, as we say, the best be at the bottom, thy thoughts are then right, and thou art righteous; for as the deep thoughts of worldlings are worldly thoughts, and the deep thoughts of wicked men are wicked thoughts, so the deep thoughts of good men are good thoughts. 'Tis a notable observation of the Holy Ghost's concerning worldly men, that "*their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever,*" etc. Why? is there any thought that is not an *inward* thought? No, but the meaning is, though they have some floating thoughts of their mortality, and the vanity and transitoriness of all worldly things, swimming, as it were, on the top; yet they do not suffer such thoughts *to sink into their hearts*, or to go to the bottom; but the thoughts that lodge there are such as his, who is said by our Saviour to have thought within himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Luke xii. 19. Note the phrase, "he thought within himself." There are other kinds of thoughts that sometimes knock at the door of the worldling's heart, nay, sometimes look in at his windows, as Paul's sermon began to press in upon Felix his heart, and to set him a-trembling; but there are other *thoughts within*, which if they cannot keep good thoughts quite out, they will keep them off from making any due or deep impression upon the heart. Now, these thoughts that nestle themselves as it were at the very heart-roots, to keep others out from reaching thither, these *deep thoughts* are they which the Scriptures call the "*inward thoughts,*" according to that of the psalmist (Psalm lxiv. 6), "The inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep."—*Faithful Teat in "Right Thoughts the Righteous man's Evidence,"* 1666.

Verse 11.—"*They call their lands after their own names.*" God makes fools of them, for how few have you that go beyond the third generation? How few houses have you that the child or the grandchild can say, "This was my grandfather's, and my great grandfather's"? How few houses have you that those that are now in them can say, "My ancestor dwelt here, and these were his lands"? Go over a whole country, few can say so. Men when they build, together with building in the earth they build castles in the air; they have conceits. Now I build for my child, and for my child's child. God crosses them. Either they have no posterity, or by a thousand things that fall out in the world, it falls out otherwise. The time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away; that is, the buildings pass away, the owning passeth away, all things here pass away; and, therefore, buy as if you possessed not, buy, so as we neglect not the best possession in heaven, and so possess these things, as being not possessed and commanded of them.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 11.—Mr. A. was a wealthy farmer in Massachusetts, about sixty years of age, and it had been his ruling, and almost only passion in life to acquire property. His neighbour B. owned a small farm, which came too near the centre of A.'s extended domain, was quite a blot in his prospect, destroyed the regularity of his lands, and on the whole it was really necessary, in his opinion, that he should add it to his other property. B. became embarrassed, and was sued; judgments were obtained, and executions issued. A. now thought he should obtain the land, but one execution after another was arranged, and finally the debt was paid off without selling the land. When A. heard of the payment of the last execution, which put an end to his hopes of obtaining the land, he exclaimed, "Well, B. is an old man, and cannot live long, and when he

dies I can buy the lot." B. was fifty-eight, A. was sixty! Reader, do you ever expect to die?—*K. Arvine's Cyclopædia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes.*

Verse 11.—I have purchased, saith one, such lands, and I have got so good a title to them, that certainly they will remain mine and my heirs for ever; never considering how all things here below are subject to ebbings and flowings, to turns and vicissitudes every day.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 11.—The fleeting nature of all earthly possessions is well illustrated in the life of William Beckford, and the unenduring character of gorgeous fabrics in the ruin of his famous Babel, Fonthill Abbey. Byron sang of Beckford's palace in Spain, in language most applicable to Fonthill:—

"There, too, thou Vathek! 'England's wealthiest son—
Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.
Here didst thou dwell; here schemes of pleasure plan,
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow.
But now, as if a thing unblest by man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow,
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide;
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied,
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide!" *C. H. S.*

Verses 11, 12.—"*They call their* GROUNDS *after their names. But the* GROUNDLING, *in the midst of splendour, endureth not.*" In verse 11, we have אַדְמוֹת, "*grounds.*" In verse 12, it is אָדָם, "*groundling,*" with a designed iteration and play upon the word; for want of an attention to which the passage has not been fully understood.—*John Mason Good.*

Verse 12.—"*Man being in honour abideth not.*" The Rabbins read it thus: "Adam being in honour, *lodged not one night.*" The Hebrew word for *abide* signifies "to stay or lodge all night." Adam, then, it seems, did not take up one night's lodging in Paradise.—*Thomas Watson's Body of Divinity.*

Verse 13.—"*This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings.*" Master Baxter speaks very well of this in his "Saints' Everlasting Rest," which is a very choice book. The gentry teach their children to follow pleasure, and the commonalty their children to follow profit, and young ones are ready to follow old ones. "*This their way is their folly.*" The very heathens condemn this, and yet Christians mind it not. Crates the philosopher said, that if possibly he might, he would willingly mount to the highest place of the city, and there cry aloud in this manner, "What mean you, my masters, and whither run you headlong? carking and caring all that ever you can, to gather goods and make riches as you do, whiles in the meantime you make little or no reckoning at all of your children, unto whom you are to leave all your riches? Do not most care more for the wealth of their children's outward man, than for the health of their inward man?"—*J. Votier's Survey of Effectual Calling*, 1652.

Verse 13.—"*This their way is their folly.*" The folly of man seldom appears more than in being very busy about nothing, in making a great cry where there is little wool; like that empty fellow that showed himself to Alexander—having spent much time, and taken much pains at it beforehand—and boasted that he could throw a pea through a little hole, expecting a great reward; but the king gave him only a bushel of peas, for a recompense suitable to his diligent negligence, or his busy idleness. Things that are vain and empty are unworthy of our care and industry. The man that by hard labour and hazard of his life did climb up to the top of the steeple to set an egg on end, was deservedly the object of pity and laughter. We shall think him little better than mad that should make as great a fire for the roasting of an egg as for the roasting of an ox.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 13.—"*Their folly: yet their posterity approve.*" Dr. Leifchild, in his "*Remarkable Facts,*" records the following incident, of a person of property, who had been accustomed regularly to attend his ministry, but who had always manifested a covetous disposition: "I was sent for to offer to him the consolation of religion as he lay upon his dying bed. What was my surprise, after having conversed and prayed with him, to find that he was unwilling to take my hand, muttering that he knew that he had not done what was right in reference to the support and furtherance of religion, but intended to amend in that respect. He then requested me to say what I thought would become of him. How could I reply, but by exhorting him to repent, and relinquishing all further thoughts of a worldly nature, to betake himself to the sacrifice and mediation of the Son of God for pardon, safety, and salvation in that world which he was to all appearance soon about to enter. He gazed at me with a look of disappointment. Upon a hint being given me to inquire into his thoughts at that moment, I questioned him very pointedly, and to my astonishment and horror, he reluctantly disclosed to me the fact that, while thus seemingly about to breathe his last, his hands were under the bed clothes grasping the keys of his cabinet and treasures, lest they should be taken from him! Soon after, he departed this life, and there was, alas! reason to fear that, together with his property, he had transmitted somewhat of his fatal passion to those who survived him. It was distressing to me to reflect that a hearer of mine should quit this world with his fingers stiffened in death around the keys of his treasures. How strong, how terrible, was the ruling passion in the death of this man!"

Verse 13.—"*Selah.*" See "Treasury of David," Vol. I., pp. 25, 29, 346, 382; and Vol. II., pp. 249—252.

Verse 14.—"*Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling,*" or as we put in the margin, "*The grave being an habitation to every one of them, shall consume their beauty.*" Some may object, Is not this true of godly men too? are not they thus handled by death and the grave? doth not death feed on them? and doth not the grave consume their beauty? I answer, Though it doth, yet it hath not to feed upon, nor consume them, as it feeds upon and consumes wicked men. For the psalmist speaks here of death as it were triumphing over the wicked, whereas the godly triumph over death. For, first, he saith, The wicked are *laid in the grave like sheep:* they lived like *wolves* or *lions*, but they are laid in the grave like *sheep*. If it be asked, Why *like sheep?* I answer, not for the innocency of their lives, but for their impotency in death; as if it had been said, when once death took them in hand to lay them in the grave, they could make no more resistance than a sheep can against a lion or a wolf. And when death hath thus laid them in the grave, then secondly, saith the psalmist, "*Death shall feed on them,*" as a lion doth upon a sheep, or any wild beast upon his prey, which is a further degree of death's triumph over the wicked. And, thirdly, "*Their beauty shall consume in the grave,*" that is, all their bodily and natural beauty (and this is all the beauty which they have) shall consume in the grave, whereas the godly have a beauty (and they count it their only beauty) which the grave cannot consume, and that is the beauty of their graces, the beauty of holiness, the spiritual beauty of the inner man, yea, and the spiritual beauty of their outward holy actings shall not consume in the grave; for, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 14.—"*Death shall feed on them:*" rather, "*Death shall be their shepherd.*" (*Sept.*) At the end of the foregoing Psalm, the psalmist had said in the name of his people, that "God is our God, for ever and ever; he will lead us as a shepherd over death," and here he takes up the same pastoral

figure, and contrasts with their case the case of the proud and prosperous worldly men, who trust in their earthly riches and power. *They* will *not* be led in safety, under the pastoral care of God, *over death.* No ; *death* itself will be *their* Shepherd, and the grave will be their sheep-fold ; where they will be laid together like sheep in a pen. As Augustine says, "Death is the shepherd of the infidel. Life (*i.e.*, Christ) is the Shepherd of the faithful." "*In inferno sunt oves quibus pastor Mors est ; in cœlo sunt oves quibus pastor Vita est.*" And so Keble—

> Even as a flock arrayed are they
> For the dark grave ; Death guides their way,
> Death is their Shepherd now.

Christopher Wordsworth.

Verse 14.—"*In the morning,*" that is, saith Dathe, in the *time of judgment.* He thinks there is here an allusion to the usual time of holding courts of justice, which was in the morning. See Psalms lxxiii. 14, and ci. 8 ; and Jer. xxi. 12.—*Editorial note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 14.—"*Their beauty shall consume in the grave.*" And now if we do but consider a little of the tombs and sepulchres of princes and noblemen, whose glory and majesty we have seen when they lived here on earth, and do behold the horrible forms and shapes which they now have, shall we not cry out as men amazed, Is this that glory ? Is this that highness and excellency ? Whither now are the degrees of their waiting servants gone ? Where are their ornaments and jewels ? Where is their pomp, their delicacy and niceness ? All these things are vanished away like the smoke, and there is now nothing left but dust, horror, and stink. The soul being dissolved, there lieth upon the ground not a human body, but a dead carcase without life, without sense, without strength, and so fearful to look upon, that the sight thereof may hardly be endured. To be sure, it is a little better (as touching the substance) than the body of a horse, or a dog, which lieth dead in the fields, and all that pass by stop their noses and make haste away, that they be not annoyed with the sight and stink thereof. Such is man's body now become ; yea, and though it were the body of a monarch, emperor, or a king. Where is that majesty, that excellency, that authority which he had aforetime when all men trembled to behold it, and might not come in presence thereof without all reverence and obeisance ? what are all those things become ? were they a dream or shadow ? After those things the funeral is prepared, the which is all that men can carry with them, of all their riches and kingdom, and this also they should not have, if in their lifetime they did not appoint it for their dignity and honour. For the prophet David saith truly (verse 16), "*Be not thou afraid though one be made rich,* or, *if the glory of his house be increased ; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away with him, neither shall his pomp follow him.*"—*Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 14.—When we look to a charnel-house, and take a view of the grave, what amazing and dismal scenes present themselves ! How many great and important images appear ! Distracting horrors strike our imagination, and hideous sounds of diseases, destruction, and death, with all their woful and black train, terrify us. Ah ! the melancholy confused heap of the ruins of mankind, what a terrible carnage is made of the human race ! and what a solemn and awful theatre of mortality, covered with the disordered remains of our fellow creatures, presents itself to our minds ! There lie the bones of a proud monarch, who fancied himself a little god, mingled with the ashes of his poorest subjects ! Death seized him in the height of his vanity, he was just returning from a conquest, and his haughty mind was swelled with his power and greatness, when one of these fatal arrows pierced his heart, and at once finished all his perishing thoughts and contrivances, then the dream of glory vanished, and all his empire was confined to the grave. Look how pale that victorious general appears, how dead, and cold, and lifeless these arms that were once accustomed to war ; see if you can discern any difference betwixt his dust and that of the most despicable slave. Yonder, a numerous army, once

fierce and resolute, whose conquests were rapid as lightning, and made all the nations to shake for fear of them, are now so weak that they lie a prey, exposed to the meanest animals, the loathsome worms, who crawl in triumph over them, and insult their decayed ruins. There a body that was so much doted on, and solicitously cared for, and the beauty and shape whereof were so foolishly admired, now noisome and rotten, nothing but vermin are now fond of it, so affecting a change hath death made upon it. Look, next to this, upon the inglorious ashes of a rich, covetous wretch, whose soul was glued to this world, and hugged itself in its treasures; with what mighty throes and convulsions did death tear him from this earth? How did his hands cling to his gold! with what vehement desires did he fasten on his silver, all of them weak and fruitless! Look now if riches saved him in that day, if you can perceive any of his useless treasures lying beside him in the grave, or if the glory of his house have descended after him! Yonder, an ambitious statesman, his rotten bones are scarce to be discerned: how did he applaud his artful schemes! how securely did he think them laid, and flattered himself with the hopes of an established greatness! but death stepped in, blew them all up at once; this grave is the whole result of his counsels. And lo, there, what horrid and suffocating stink ascends from these many hellish sacrifices of lust and impurity, who wasted their strength in debauch, and carried down with them nothing but the shame of beastly pleasures to the grave. But there is no end to the corpses, nor can we survey this terrible field of death's conquests.—*William Dunlop.*

Verse 15 (*last clause*).—"*For he shall take me.*" This short half-verse is, as Böttcher remarks, the more weighty, from its very shortness. The same expression occurs again, lxxiii. 24, "Thou shalt take me," the original of both being Gen. v. 24, where it is used of the translation of Enoch, "He was not, for God *took* him."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 17.—"*For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away.*" The form of money agrees well with the condition of it; it is stamped round, because it is so apt to run away. Could we be rich so long as we live, yet that were uncertain enough, for life itself is but a dream, a shadow, but a dream of a shadow. (Augustine.) Rich men are but like hailstones; they make a noise in the world, as the other rattle on the tiles of a house; down they fall, lie still, and melt away. So that if riches could stay by a man, yet he cannot stay by them. Spite of his teeth, *he shall carry away nothing when he dies.* Life and goods are both in a vessel, both cast away at once; yea, of the two, life hath the more likelihood of continuance. Let it fly never so fast away, riches have eagles' wings, and will outfly it. There be thieves in the highways, that will take our moneys and spare our lives. In our penal laws, there be not so many ways to forfeit our lives as our goods. Rich Job lived to see himself poor to a proverb. How many in this city reputed rich, yet have broken for thousands! There are innumerable ways to be poor; a fire, a thief, a false servant, suretyship, trusting of bad customers, an unfaithful factor, a pirate, an unskilful pilot, hath brought rich men to poverty. One gale of wind is able to make merchants rich or beggars. Man's life is like the banks of a river, his temporal estate is the stream: time will moulder away the banks, but the stream stays not for that, it glides away continually. Life is the tree, riches are the fruit, or rather the leaves; the leaves will fall, the fruit is plucked, and yet the tree stands. Some write of the pine tree, that if the bark be pulled off, it lasts long; being on, it rots. If the worldling's bark were stripped off, he might perhaps live the longer, there is great hope he would live the better.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 17.—"*He shall carry nothing away.*" It is with us in this world, as it was in the Jewish fields and vineyards: *pluck and eat* they might what they would while they were there; but they might not pocket or put up ought to carry with them. Deut. xxiii. 24.—*Thomas Gataker.*

Verse 17.—"*He shall carry nothing away.*" "He hath swallowed down

riches, and he shall vomit them up again : God shall cast them out of his belly." Job xx. 15.

Verse 17.—"*Descend.*" Death takes the sinner by the throat, and "hauls him down stairs to the grave." The indulgence in any sinful propensity has this downward, deathly tendency. Every lust, whether for riches or honours, for gambling, wine, or women, leads the deluded wretched votary step by step to the chambers of death. There is no hope in the dread prospect ; trouble and anguish possess the spirit. Hast thou escaped, O my soul, from the net of the infernal fowler ? Never forget that it is as a brand *snatched* from the burning. Oh, to grace how great a debtor !—*George Offor's note in "The Works of John Bunyan."*

Verse 17.—

> You will carry none of your riches, fool, to the waters of Acheron,
> You will be ferried over quite naked in the infernal boat.
>
> *Propertius.*

Verse 18.—How foolish is it to account thyself a better man than another, only because thy dunghill is a little bigger than his ! These things are not at all to be reckoned into the value and worth of a man ; they are all without thee, and concern thee no more than fine clothes do the health or strength of the body. It is wealth, indeed, that makes all the noise and bustle in the world, and challengeth all the respect and honour to itself ; and the ignorant vulgar, whose eyes are dazzled with pomp and bravery, pay it with a stupid and astonished reverence. Yet know, that it is but thy silks and velvet, thy lands, or thy retinue and servants, they venerate, not thee : and if thou thinkest otherwise, thou art as justly ridiculous as that ass in the apologue, that grew very gravely proud, and took state, when the people fell prostrate before him, adoring, not him, but the idol he carried.—*Ezekiel Hopkins.*

Verse 20.—"*Like the beasts that perish.*" My lords, it is no wonder at all, if men that affect beastly pleasures, and dote upon perishing honours, become "*like the beasts that perish.*" It is no miracle if he that lives like a beast dies like a beast. Take a man that hath lived like the fool in the gospel, and tell me, what hath this man done for his immortal soul more than a beast doth for its perishing soul ? Soul, soul, cease from care, eat, drink, and take thine ease ; this is the constant ditty of most men in honour : they have studied clothes and victuals, titles and offices, ways of gain and pleasure. Am I not yet at highest ? They have, it may be, studied the black art of flattery and treachery ; they understand the humour of the times, the compliances and dependences of this and the other statesman, the projects of divers princes abroad, and the main design here at home. Is this all ? Why, then, be it known unto you, that the men of this strain have made no better provision for their precious souls, than if they had the soul, the vanishing soul of a beast within them ; and certainly, if we were to judge of the substance of men's souls by their unworthy and sensual conversation, we might easily fall into that heresy, that dangerous dream of some who conceive that their souls are mortal.—*Francis Cheynell, in a Sermon entitled, "The Man of Honour," . . . . preached before the Lords of Parliament*, 1645.

Verse 20.—"*Like the beasts that perish.*"—Sin is both *formaliter* and *effective* vile. As it is so in itself, so it has made man vile. No creature so debased as man, being in this respect become viler than any creature. There is no such depravation in the nature of any creature, except in the diabolical nature. No creature ever razed God's image out of its nature, but only man. There is no aversions to the will of God, no inclination to what offends him, in any creature on earth but man. Man, then, who was once the glory of the creation, is become the vilest of all creatures, for that is vilest which is most contrary to the infinite glory, but so is our nature, "Man being in honour, abideth not," is now "*like the beasts that perish ;*" nay, worse than they, if the greatest evil can make him worse. Man was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with

glory, advanced to be lord and governor of all the works of his hands; and all creatures in this world were put under his feet. Psalm viii. 5, 6. But by this natural corruption he that was but a little lower than angels is now something below the beasts. He was to have dominion, but is made baser than those over whom he rules. They were put under his feet, but now he is as low as they. This is the sad issue of natural corruption.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 20.—"*Like the beasts.*" Man is so much a beast, that he cannot know himself to be one till God teach him. And we never learn to be men till we have learned that we were beasts. . . . . It is not said he is like this or that beast, but "*he is like the beasts that perish.*" Take any beast, or all beasts, the worst of beasts, he is the picture of them all, and he daily exemplifies the vilest of their qualities in his own.—*Joseph Caryl.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 2.—I. The common needs of rich and poor men. II. The common privileges of rich and poor saints. III. Their common service. IV. Their common heaven.

Verse 3.—The deep things of God are intended, I. To exercise our minds to understand them. II. To try our faith by believing them—"incline" implies a submissive mind. III. To excite our joy as we grasp them—"upon the harp." IV. To employ our faculties in explaining them to others.

Verse 5.—I. The effects of our sin remain, 1. In ourselves. 2. In others. II. In a time of conviction they "*compass us about:*" better to do so in this life, than to haunt us as ghosts for ever. III. When they are pardoned we have nothing to fear.—*G. R.*

Verse 7.—1. *Implied.* The soul needs redeeming. 2. *Denied.* Wealth, power, learning, none can redeem. 3. *Supplied*—a ransom by Jesus. 4. *Applied*—by the Spirit to our actual deliverance.

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—Wherein the ungodly are like beasts, and wherein different.

Verse 12.—Here is a twofold thwarting or crossing of the purposes of the ungodly worldling. I. The first is, *he shall not be that which he ever wished to be:* he shall not continue in honour. II. The other is this, *he shall be that which he never desired to be:* he shall be like the beasts that die. He shall miss of that which he sought for, and he shall have that which he looked not for.—*S. Hieron.*

Verse 13.—I. In secular things men imitate the *wisdom* of others. II. In spiritual things they imitate *their folly.*—*G. R.*

Verse 14.—I. In proportion to the prosperity of the ungodly here, will be their misery hereafter: as sheep from the fat pasture led to the slaughter-house. II. In proportion to their luxury here, will be their corruption hereafter—"*Death shall feed on them:*" they have become well fed for death to feed on them. III. In proportion to their dignity here, will be their degradation hereafter—"*The upright shall have,*" etc. Oh, what a contrast between the rich man and Lazarus then! IV. In proportion to their beauty here, will be their deformity hereafter. "Art thou become like one of us?"—*G. R.*

Verse 14.—Sheep, how far they image the wicked.

Verse 14.—"*In the morning.*" See the various Biblical prophecies of what will happen "in the morning."

Verse 15.—1. *Return* to the dust I shall. 2. *Redeem* from the dust he will. 3. *Receive* into heaven he will. 4. *Rejoice* for ever I shall.

Verse 17.—The loaded and unloaded sinner.

Verse 20.—I. Men of spiritual understanding without worldly honour are higher than the angels of God in heaven. II. Men in worldly honour without the true wisdom are worse than the beasts that perish.—*G. R.*

PSALM L.

TITLE.—A Psalm of Asaph. *This is the first of the Psalm of Asaph, but whether it was the production of that eminent musician, or merely dedicated to him, we cannot tell. The titles of twelve Psalms bear his name, but it could not in all of them be meant to ascribe their authorship to him, for several of these Psalms are of too late a date to have been composed by the same writer as the others. There was an Asaph in David's time, who was one of David's chief musicians, and his family appear to have continued long after in their hereditary office of temple musicians. An Asaph is mentioned as a recorder or secretary in the days of Hezekiah* (2 Kings xviii. 18), *and another was keeper of the royal forests under Artaxerxes. That Asaph did most certainly write some of the Psalms is clear from* 2 Chron. xxix. 30, *where it is recorded that the Levites were commanded to "sing praises unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer," but that other Asaphic Psalms were not of his composition, but were only committed to his care as a musician, is equally certain from* 1 Chron. xvi. 7, *where David is said to have delivered a Psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. It matters little to us whether he wrote or sang, for poet and musician are near akin, and if one composes words and another sets them to music, they rejoice together before the Lord.*

DIVISION.—*The Lord is represented as summoning the whole earth to hear his declaration,* 1—6 ; *he then declares the nature of the worship which he accepts,* 7—15, *accuses the ungodly of breaches of the precepts of the second table,* 16–21, *and closes the court with a word of threatening,* 22, *and a direction of grace,* 23.

EXPOSITION.

THE mighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence : a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 Gather my saints together unto me ; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness : for God *is* judge himself. Selah.

1. "*The mighty God, even the Lord*"—El, Elohim, Jehovah, three glorious names for the God of Israel. To render the address the more impressive, these august titles are mentioned, just as in royal decrees the names and dignities of monarchs are placed in the forefront. Here the true God is described as Almighty, as the only and perfect object of adoration and as the self-existent One. "*Hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof.*" The dominion of Jehovah extends over the whole earth, and therefore to all mankind is his decree directed. The east and the west are bidden to hear the God who makes his sun to rise on every quarter of the globe. Shall the summons of the great King be despised? Will we dare provoke him to anger by slighting his call?

2. "*Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*" The Lord is

represented not only as speaking to the earth, but as coming forth to reveal the glory of his presence to an assembled universe. God of old dwelt in Zion among his chosen people, but here the beams of his splendour are described as shining forth upon all nations. The sun was spoken of in the first verse, but here is a far brighter sun. The majesty of God is most conspicuous among his own elect, but it is not confined to them; the church is not a dark lantern, but a candlestick. God shines not only in Zion, but out of her. She is made perfect in beauty by his indwelling, and that beauty is seen by all observers when the Lord shines forth from her.

Observe how with trumpet voice and flaming ensign the infinite Jehovah summons the heavens and the earth to hearken to his word.

3. "*Our God shall come.*" The psalmist speaks of himself and his brethren as standing in immediate anticipation of the appearing of the Lord upon the scene. "He comes," they say, "our covenant God is coming;" they can hear his voice from afar, and perceive the splendour of his attending train. Even thus should we await the long-promised appearing of the Lord from heaven. "*And shall not keep silence.*" He comes to speak, to plead with his people, to accuse and judge the ungodly. He has been silent long in patience, but soon he will speak with power. What a moment of awe when the Omnipotent is expected to reveal himself! What will be the reverent joy and solemn expectation when the poetic scene of this Psalm becomes in the last great day an actual reality! "*A fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*" Flame and hurricane are frequently described as the attendants of the divine appearance. "Our God is a consuming fire." "At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hailstones and coals of fire." Psalm xviii. 12. "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind." "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God." 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. Fire is the emblem of justice in action, and the tempest is a token of his overwhelming power. Who will not listen in solemn silence when such is the tribunal from which the judge pleads with heaven and earth?

4. "*He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth.*" Angels and men, the upper and the lower worlds, are called to witness the solemn scene. The whole creation shall stand in court to testify to the solemnity and the truth of the divine pleading. Both earth beneath and heaven above shall unite in condemning sin; the guilty shall have no appeal, though all are summoned that they may appeal if they dare. Both angels and men have seen the guilt of mankind and the goodness of the Lord, they shall therefore confess the justice of the divine utterance, and say "Amen" to the sentence of the supreme Judge. Alas, ye despisers! What will ye do and to whom will ye fly? "*That he may judge his people.*" Judgment begins at the house of God. The trial of the visible people of God will be a most awful ceremonial. He will thoroughly purge his floor. He will discern between his nominal and his real people, and that in open court, the whole universe looking on. My soul, when this actually takes place, how will it fare with thee? Canst thou endure the day of his coming?

5. "*Gather my saints together unto me.*" Go, ye swift-winged messengers, and separate the precious from the vile. Gather out the wheat of the heavenly garner. Let the long-scattered, but elect people, known by my separating grace to be my sanctified ones, be now assembled in one place. All are not saints who seem to be so—a severance must be made; therefore let all who profess to be saints be gathered before my throne of judgment, and let them hear the word which will search and try the whole, that the false may be convicted and the true revealed. "*Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice;*" this is the grand test, and yet some have dared to imitate it. The covenant was ratified by the slaying of victims, the cutting and dividing of offerings; this the righteous have done by accepting with true faith the great propitiatory sacrifice, and this the pretenders have done in merely outward

form. Let them be gathered before the throne for trial and testing, and as many as have really ratified the covenant by faith in the Lord Jesus shall be attested before all worlds as the objects of distinguishing grace, while formalists shall learn that outward sacrifices are all in vain. Oh, solemn assize, how does my soul bow in awe at the prospect thereof!

6. "*And the heavens shall declare his righteousness.*" Celestial intelligences and the spirits of just men made perfect, shall magnify the infallible judgment of the divine tribunal. Now they doubtless wonder at the hypocrisy of men; then they shall equally marvel at the exactness of the severance between the true and the false. "*For God is judge himself.*" This is the reason for the correctness of the judgment. Priests of old, and churches of later times, were readily deceived, but not so the all-discerning Lord. No deputy-judge sits on the great white throne; the injured Lord of all himself weighs the evidence and allots the vengeance or reward. The scene in the Psalm is a grand poetical conception, but it is also an inspired prophecy of that day which shall burn as an oven, when the Lord shall discern between him that feareth him and him that feareth him not. "*Selah.*" Here we may well pause in reverent prostration, in deep searching of heart, in humble prayer, and in awe-struck expectation.

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.

8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before me.

9 I will take no bullock out of thy house, *nor* he goats out of thy folds.

10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

The address which follows is directed to the professed people of God. It is clearly, in the first place, meant for Israel; but is equally applicable to the visible church of God in every age. It declares the futility of external worship when spiritual faith is absent, and the mere outward ceremonial is rested in.

7. "*Hear, O my people, and I will speak.*" Because Jehovah speaks, and they are avowedly his own people, they are bound to give earnest heed. "Let me speak," saith the great I AM. The heavens and earth are but listeners, the Lord is about both to testify and to judge. "*O Israel, and I will testify against thee.*" Their covenant name is mentioned to give point to the address; it was a double evil that the chosen nation should become so carnal, so unspiritual, so false, so heartless to their God. God himself, whose eyes sleep not, who is not misled by rumour, but sees for himself, enters on the scene as witness against his favoured nation. Alas! for us when God, even our fathers' God, testifies to the hypocrisy of the visible church. "*I am God, even thy God.*" He had taken them to be his peculiar people above all other nations, and they had in the most solemn manner avowed that he was their God. Hence the special reason for calling them to account. The law began with, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,"

and now the session of their judgment opens with the same reminder of their singular position, privilege, and responsibility. It is not only that Jehovah is God, but *thy* God, O Israel; this it is that makes thee so amenable to his searching reproofs.

8. "*I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been ever before me.*" Though they had not failed in maintaining his outward worship, or even if they had, he was not about to call them to account for this: a more weighty matter was now under consideration. They thought the daily sacrifices and the abounding burnt offerings to be everything: he counted them nothing if the inner sacrifice of heart devotion had been neglected. What was greatest with them was least with God. It is even so to-day. Sacraments (so called) and sacred rites are the main concern with unconverted but religious men, but with the Most High the spiritual worship which they forget is the sole matter. Let the external be maintained by all means according to the divine command, but if the secret and spiritual be not in them, they are a vain oblation, a dead ritual, and even an abomination before the Lord.

9. "*I will take no bullock out of thy house.*" Foolishly they dreamed that bullocks with horns and hoofs could please the Lord, when indeed he sought for hearts and souls. Impiously they fancied that Jehovah needed these supplies, and that if they fed his altar with their fat beasts, he would be content. What he intended for their instruction, they made their confidence. They remembered not that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "*Nor he goats out of thy folds.*" He mentions these lesser victims as if to rouse their common sense to see that the great Creator could find no satisfaction in mere animal offerings. If he needed these, he would not appeal to their scanty stalls and folds; in fact, he here refuses to take so much as one, if they brought them under the false and dishonouring view, that they were in themselves pleasing to him. This shows that the sacrifices of the law were symbolical of higher and spiritual things, and were not pleasing to God except under their typical aspect. The believing worshipper looking beyond the outward was accepted, the unspiritual who had no respect to their meaning was wasting his substance, and blaspheming the God of heaven.

10. "*For every beast of the forest is mine.*" How could they imagine that the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, had need of beasts, when all the countless hordes that find shelter in a thousand forests and wildernesses belong to him? "*And the cattle upon a thousand hills.*" Not alone the wild beasts, but also the tamer creatures are all his own. Even if God cared for these things, he could supply himself. Their cattle were not, after all, their own, but were still the great Creator's property, why then should he be beholden to them. From Dan to Beersheba, from Nebaioth to Lebanon, there fed not a beast which was not marked with the name of the great Shepherd; why, then, should he crave oblations of Israel? What a slight is here put even upon sacrifices of divine appointment when wrongly viewed as in themselves pleasing to God! And all this to be so expressly stated under the law! How much more is this clear under the gospel, when it is so much more plainly revealed, that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"? Ye Ritualists, ye Sacramentarians, ye modern Pharisees, what say ye to this?

11. "*I know all the fowls of the mountains.*" All the winged creatures are under my inspection and near my hand; what then can be the value of your pairs of turtledoves, and your two young pigeons? The great Lord not only feeds all his creatures, but is well acquainted with each one; how wondrous is this knowledge! "*And the wild beasts of the field are mine.*" The whole population moving over the plain belongs to me; why then should I seek your beeves and rams? In me all things live and move; how mad are you to suppose that I desire your living things! A spiritual God demands other life than that which is seen in animals; he looks for spiritual sacrifice; for the love, the trust, the praise, the life of your hearts.

12. "*If I were hungry, I would not tell thee.*" Strange conception, a hungry God! Yet if such an absurd ideal could be truth, and if the Lord hungered for meat, he would not ask it of men. He could provide for himself out of his own possessions; he would not turn suppliant to his own creatures. Even under the grossest idea of God, faith in outward ceremonies is ridiculous. Do men fancy that the Lord needs banners, and music, and incense, and fine linen? If he did, the stars would emblazon his standard, the winds and the waves become his orchestra, ten thousand times ten thousand flowers would breathe forth perfume, the snow should be his alb, the rainbow his girdle, the clouds of light his mantle. O fools and slow of heart, ye worship ye know not what! "*For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.*" What can he need who is owner of all things and able to create as he wills? Thus overwhelmingly does the Lord pour forth his arguments upon formalists.

13. "*Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*" Are you so infatuated as to think this? Is the great I AM subject to corporeal wants, and are they to be thus grossly satisfied? Heathens thought thus of their idols, but dare ye think thus of the God who made the heavens and the earth? Can ye have fallen so low as to think thus of me, O Israel? What vivid reasoning is here! How the fire-flashes dart into the idiot faces of trusters in outward forms! Ye dupes of Rome, can ye read this and be unmoved? The expostulation is indignant; the questions utterly confound; the conclusion is inevitable; heart worship only can be acceptable with the true God. It is inconceivable that outward things can gratify him, except so far as through them our faith and love express themselves.

14. "*Offer unto God thanksgiving.*" No longer look at your sacrifices as in themselves gifts pleasing to me, but present them as the tributes of your gratitude; it is then that I will accept them, but not while your souls have no love and no thankfulness to offer me. The sacrifices, as considered in themselves, are contemned, but the internal emotions of love consequent upon a remembrance of divine goodness, are commended as the substance, meaning, and soul of sacrifice. Even when the legal ceremonials were not abolished, this was true, and when they came to an end, this truth was more than ever made manifest. Not for want of bullocks on the altar was Israel blamed, but for want of thankful adoration before the Lord. She excelled in the visible, but in the inward grace, which is the one thing needful, she sadly failed. Too many in these days are in the same condemnation. "*And pay thy vows unto the most High.*" Let the sacrifice be really presented to the God who seeth the heart, pay to him the love you promised, the service you covenanted to render, the loyalty of heart you have vowed to maintain. O for grace to do this! O that we may be graciously enabled to love God, and live up to our profession! To be, indeed, the servants of the Lord, the lovers of Jesus, this is our main concern. What avails our baptism, to what end our gatherings at the Lord's table, to what purpose our solemn assemblies, if we have not the fear of the Lord, and vital godliness reigning within our bosoms?

15. "*And call upon me in the day of trouble.*" Oh, blessed verse! Is this then true sacrifice? Is it an offering to ask an alms of heaven? It is even so. The King himself so regards it. For herein is faith manifested, herein is love proved, for in the hour of peril we fly to those we love. It seems a small thing to pray to God when we are distressed, yet is it a more acceptable worship than the mere heartless presentation of bullocks and he goats. This is a voice from the throne, and how full of mercy it is! It is very tempestuous round about Jehovah, and yet what soft drops of mercy's rain drop from the bosom of the storm! Who would not offer such sacrifice? Troubled one, haste to present it now! Who shall say that Old Testament saints did not know the gospel? Its very spirit and essence breathes like frankincense all around this holy Psalm. "*I will deliver thee.*" The reality of thy sacrifice of prayer shall be seen in its answer. Whether the smoke of burning bulls be sweet to me or no, certainly thy humble prayer shall be, and I will prove it so by my gracious

reply to thy supplication. This promise is very large, and may refer both to temporal and eternal deliverances; faith can turn it every way, like the sword of the cherubim. "*And thou shalt glorify me.*" Thy prayer will honour me, and thy grateful perception of my answering mercy will also glorify me. The goats and bullocks would prove a failure, but the true sacrifice never could. The calves of the stall might be a vain oblation, but not the calves of sincere lips.

Thus we see what is true ritual. Here we read inspired rubrics. Spiritual worship is the great, the essential matter; all else without it is rather provoking than pleasing to God. As helps to the soul, outward offerings were precious, but when men went not beyond them, even their hallowed things were profaned in the view of heaven.

16 But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

21 These *things* hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself: *but* I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.

Here the Lord turns to the manifestly wicked among his people; and such there were even in the highest places of his sanctuary. If moral formalists had been rebuked, how much more these immoral pretenders to fellowship with heaven? If the lack of heart spoiled the worship of the more decent and virtuous, how much more would violations of the law, committed with a high hand, corrupt the sacrifices of the wicked?

16. "*But unto the wicked God saith.*" To the breakers of the second table he now addresses himself; he had previously spoken to the neglecters of the first. "*What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?*" You violate openly my moral law, and yet are great sticklers for my ceremonial commands! What have you to do with them? What interest can you have in them? Do you dare to teach my law to others, and profane it yourselves? What impudence, what blasphemy is this! Even if you claim to be sons of Levi, what of that? Your wickedness disqualifies you, disinherits you, puts you out of the succession. It should silence you, and would if my people were as spiritual as I would have them, for they would refuse to hear you, and to pay you the portion of temporal things which is due to my true servants. You count up your holy days, you contend for rituals, you fight for externals, and yet the weightier matters of the law ye despise! Ye blind guides, ye strain out gnats and swallow camels; your hypocrisy is written on your foreheads and manifest to all. "*Or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth.*" Ye talk of being in covenant with me, and yet trample my holiness beneath your feet as swine trample upon pearls; think ye that I can brook this? Your mouths are full of lying and slander, and yet ye mouth my words as if they were fit morsels for such as you! How horrible an evil it is, that to this day we see men explaining doctrines who despise precepts! They make grace a coverlet for sin, and even judge themselves to be sound in the faith, while they are rotten in life. We need the grace of the doctrines as much as the doctrines of grace, and

without it an apostle is but a Judas, and a fair-spoken professor is an arrant enemy of the cross of Christ.

17. "*Seeing thou hatest instruction.*" Profane professors are often too wise to learn, too besotted with conceit to be taught of God. What a monstrosity that men should declare those statutes which with their hearts they do not know, and which in their lives they openly disavow! Woe unto the men who hate the instruction which they take upon themselves to give. "*And castest my words behind thee.*" Despising them, throwing them away as worthless, putting them out of sight as obnoxious. Many boasters of the law did this practically; and in these last days there are pickers and choosers of God's words who cannot endure the practical part of Scripture; they are disgusted at duty, they abhor responsibility, they disembowel texts of their plain meanings, they wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. It is an ill sign when a man dares not look a Scripture in the face, and an evidence of brazen impudence when he tries to make it mean something less condemnatory of his sins, and endeavours to prove it to be less sweeping in its demands. How powerful is the argument that such men have no right to take the covenant of God into their mouths, seeing that its spirit does not regulate their lives!

18. "*When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him.*" Moral honesty cannot be absent where true grace is present. Those who excuse others in trickery are guilty themselves; those who use others to do unjust actions for them are doubly so. If a man be ever so religious, if his own actions do not rebuke dishonesty, he is an accomplice with thieves. If we can acquiesce in anything which is not upright, we are not upright ourselves, and our religion is a lie. "*And hast been partaker with adulterers.*" One by one the moral precepts are thus broken by the sinners in Zion. Under the cloak of piety, unclean livers conceal themselves. We may do this by smiling at unchaste jests, listening to indelicate expressions, and conniving at licentious behaviour in our presence; and if we thus act, how dare we preach, or lead public prayer, or wear the Christian name? See how the Lord lays righteousness to the plummet. How plainly all this declares that without holiness no man shall see the Lord! No amount of ceremonial or theological accuracy can cover dishonesty and fornication: these filthy things must be either purged from us by the blood of Jesus, or they will kindle a fire in God's anger which will burn even to the lowest hell.

19. "*Thou givest thy mouth to evil.*" Sins against the ninth commandment are here mentioned. The man who surrenders himself to the habit of slander is a vile hypocrite if he associates himself with the people of God. A man's health is readily judged by his tongue. A foul mouth, a foul heart. Some slander almost as often as they breathe, and yet are great upholders of the church, and great sticklers for holiness. To what depths will not they go in evil, who delight in spreading it with their tongues? "*And thy tongue frameth deceit.*" This is a more deliberate sort of slander, where the man dexterously elaborates false witness, and concocts methods of defamation. There is an ingenuity of calumny in some men, and, alas! even in some who are thought to be followers of the Lord Jesus. They manufacture falsehoods, weave them in their loom, hammer them on their anvil, and then retail their wares in every company. Are these accepted with God? Though they bring their wealth to the altar, and speak eloquently of truth and of salvation, have they any favour with God? We should blaspheme the holy God if we were to think so. They are corrupt in his sight, a stench in his nostrils. He will cast all liars into hell. Let them preach, and pray, and sacrifice as they will; till they become truthful, the God of truth loathes them utterly.

20. "*Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother.*" He sits down to it, makes it his meat, studies it, resolves upon it, becomes a master of defamation, occupies the chair of calumny. His nearest friend is not safe, his dearest relative escapes not. "*Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*" He ought to love him best, but he has an ill word for him. The son of one's own mother was to

the Oriental a very tender relation ; but the wretched slanderer knows no claims of kindred. He stabs his brother in the dark, and aims a blow at him who came forth of the same womb ; yet he wraps himself in the robe of hypocrisy, and dreams that he is a favourite of heaven, an accepted worshipper of the Lord. Are such monsters to be met with nowadays? Alas! they pollute our churches still, and are roots of bitterness, spots in our solemn feasts, wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Perhaps some such may read these lines, but they will probably read them in vain ; their eyes are too dim to see their own condition, their hearts are waxen gross, their ears are dull of hearing ; they are given up to a strong delusion to believe a lie, that they may be damned.

21. "*These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.*" No swift judgment overthrew the sinner—longsuffering reigned ; no thunder was heard in threatening, and no bolt of fire was hurled in execution. "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" The inference drawn from the Lord's patience was infamous ; the respited culprit thought his judge to be one of the same order as himself. He offered sacrifice, and deemed it accepted ; he continued in sin, and remained unpunished, and therefore he rudely said, "Why need believe these crazy prophets? God cares not how we live so long as we pay our tithes. Little does he consider how we get the plunder, so long as we bring a bullock to his altar." What will not men imagine of the Lord? At one time they liken the glory of Israel to a calf, and anon unto their brutish selves. "*But I will reprove thee.*" At last I will break silence and let thee know my mind. "*And set them in order before thine eyes.*" I will marshal thy sins in battle array. I will make thee see them, I will put them down item by item, classified, and arranged. Thou shalt know that if silent awhile, I was never blind or deaf. I will make thee perceive what thou hast tried to deny. I will leave the seat of mercy for the throne of judgment, and there will I let thee see how great the difference between thee and me.

22 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.

22. "*Now*" or *oh!* it is a word of entreaty, for the Lord is loath even to let the most ungodly run on to destruction. "*Consider this ;*" take these truths to heart, ye who trust in ceremonies and ye who live in vice, for both of you sin in that "*ye forget God.*" Bethink you how unaccepted you are, and turn unto the Lord. See how you have mocked the eternal, and repent of your iniquities. "*Lest I tear you in pieces,*" as the lion rends his prey, "*and there be none to deliver,*" no Saviour, no refuge, no hope. Ye reject the Mediator : beware, for ye will sorely need one in the day of wrath, and none will be near to plead for you. How terrible, how complete, how painful, how humiliating, will be the destruction of the wicked! God uses no soft words, or velvet metaphors, nor may his servants do so when they speak of the wrath to come. O reader, consider this.

23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

23. "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.*" Praise is the best sacrifice ; true, hearty, gracious thanksgiving from a renewed mind. Not the lowing of bullocks bound to the altar, but the songs of redeemed men are the music which the ear of Jehovah delights in. Sacrifice your loving gratitude, and God is honoured thereby. "*And to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*" Holy living is a choice evidence of salvation. He who submits his whole way to divine guidance, and is careful to honour God in his life, brings an offering which the Lord accepts through his dear Son ;

and such a one shall be more and more instructed, and made experimentally to know the Lord's salvation. He needs salvation, for the best ordering of the life cannot save us, but *that salvation* he shall have. Not to ceremonies, not to unpurified lips, is the blessing promised, but to grateful hearts and holy lives.

O Lord, give us to stand in the judgment with those who have worshipped thee aright and have seen thy salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—The exordium or beginning of this Psalm is the most grand and striking that can possibly be imagined—the speaker GOD, the audience an assembled world! We cannot compare or assimilate the scene here presented to us with any human resemblance; nor do I imagine that earth will ever behold such a day till that hour when the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, and shall gather all the nations of the earth from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead that are in them.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 1.—"*El, Elohim, Jehovah has spoken!*" So reads the Hebrew.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—Some have observed that these three names, *El, Elohim, Jehovah*, here mentioned, have three very distinct accents set to them, and which being joined to a verb singular דִּבֶּר, *hath spoken*, contains the mystery of the trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine Essence.—*John Gill.*

Verse 1.—"*And called the earth*," etc., *i.e., all the inhabitants of the earth* he has commanded to come as witnesses and spectators of the judgment.—*Simon de Muis.*

Verses 1—5.—

> No more shall atheists mock his long delay;
> His vengeance sleeps no more; behold the day!
> Behold!—the Judge descends; his guards are nigh,
> Tempests and fire attend him down the sky.
> When God appears, all nature shall adore him.
> While sinners tremble, saints rejoice before him.
> Heaven, earth and hell, draw near; let all things come,
> To hear my justice, and the sinner's doom;
> But gather first my saints (the Judge commands),
> Bring them, ye angels, from their distant lands.
> When Christ returns, wake every cheerful passion,
> And shout, ye saints; he comes for your salvation.
>
> *Isaac Watts.*

Verse 2.—*Out of Zion, the perfection of God's beauty hath shined; or, God has caused the perfection of beauty to shine out of Zion.—Martin Geier.*

Verse 2.—"*God hath shined.*" Like the sun in his strength, sometimes for the comfort of his people, as Psalm lxxx. 1; sometimes for the terror of evil-doers, as Psalm xciv. 1, and here. But evermore God is terrible out of his holy places. Psalm lxviii. 35, and lxxxix. 7.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 2.—"*God hath shined.*" The proper meaning of יָפַע is to scatter rays from afar, and from a lofty place, and to glitter. *It is a word of a grand sound*, says Ch. Schultens, *which is always used of a magnificent and flashing light.* . . . . It is apparently used of the splendid symbol of God's presence, as in Deut. xxxiv. 2, where he is said to *scatter beams* from Mount Paran. From which it is manifest that it may refer to the pillar of cloud and fire, the seat of

the Divine Majesty conspicuous on Mount Sinai, or on the tabernacle, or the loftiest part of the temple.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3.—"*Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.*" He kept silence that he might be judged, he will not keep silence when he begins to judge. It would not have been said, "*He shall come manifestly,*" unless at first he had come concealed; nor, "*He shall not keep silence,*" had he not at first kept silence. How did he keep silence? Ask Isaiah: "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isa. liii. 7. But he shall come manifestly, and shall not keep silence. How manifestly? "*A fire shall go before him, and round about him a mighty tempest.*" That tempest is to carry wholly away the chaff from the floor which is now in threshing; that fire, to consume what the tempest carries off. Now, however, he is silent; silent in judgment, but not in precept. For if Christ is silent, what mean these gospels? What the voices of the apostles? the canticles of the Psalms? the lofty utterances of the prophets? Truly in all these Christ is not silent. Howbeit he is silent for the present in not taking vengeance, not in not warning. But he will come in surpassing brightness to take vengeance, and will be seen of all, even of those who believe not on him; but now, forasmuch as although present he was not concealed, it behoved him to be despised: for unless he had been despised he would not have been crucified; if not crucified he would not have shed his blood, the price with which he redeemed us. But in order that he might give a price for us, he was crucified; that he might be crucified, he was despised; that he might be despised, he appeared in humble guise.—*Augustine.*

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—The future in the first clause may be rendered *he is coming*, as if the sound of his voice and the light of his glory had preceded his actual appearance. The imagery is borrowed from the giving of the law at Sinai.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—*May our God come!** A prayer for the hastening of his advent, as in the Apocalypse, xxii. 20.—*Pool's Synopsis.*

Verse 3.—"*A fire shall devour before him.*" As he gave his law in fire, so in fire shall he require it.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 4.—"*He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth.*" That these dumb creatures may be as so many speaking evidences against an unworthy people, and witnesses of God's righteous dealings against them. See Deut. xxxii. 1; Isaiah i. 2; Mic. vi. 2. The Chaldee thus paraphraseth: *He will call the high angels from above; and the just of the earth from beneath.*—*John Trapp.*

Verse 5.—"*Gather,*" etc. To whom are these words addressed? Many suppose to the angels, as the ministers of God's will; but it is unnecessary to make the expression more definite than it is in the Psalm.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 5.—"*My saints,*" the objects of my mercy, those whom I have called and specially distinguished. The term is here descriptive of a relation, not of an intrinsic quality.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 5.—"*Gather my saints together unto me.*" There is a double or twofold gathering to Christ. There is a gathering unto Christ by faith, a gathering within the bond of the covenant, a gathering into the family of God, a gathering unto the root of Jesse, standing up for an ensign of the people. "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." Isa. xi. 10. This is the main end of the gospel, the great work of ministers, the gathering of sinners unto Christ. But then there is a gathering unto Christ at the general

* Version of Junius & Tremellius.

judgment; and this is the gathering that is here spoken of. This gathering is consequential to the other. Christ will gather none to him at the last day but those that are gathered to him by faith here; he will give orders to gather together unto him all these, and none but these, that have taken hold of his covenant. . . . . .

I would speak of Christ's owning and acknowledging the saints at his second coming. His owning and acknowledging them is imported in his giving these orders: "*Gather my saints together unto me.*" . . . . . Now upon this head I mention the things following:—1. Saintship will be the only mark of distinction in that day. There are many marks of distinction now; but these will all cease, and this only will remain. 2. Saintship will then be Christ's badge of honour. Beware of mocking at saintship, or sanctity, holiness, and purity; for it is Christ's badge of honour, the garment with which his followers are clothed, and will be the only badge of honour at the great day. 3. Christ will forget and misken none of the saints. Many of the saints are forgotten here, it is forgotten that such persons were in the world, but Christ will forget and misken none of them at the great day; he will give forth a list of all his saints, and give orders to gather them all unto him. 4. He will confess, own, and acknowledge them before his Father, and his holy angels. Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8; Rev. iii. 5. They are to go to my Father's house, and they are to go thither in my name, in my right, and at my back; and so it is necessary I should own and acknowledge them before my Father. But what need is there for his owning them before the angels? *Ans.* They are to be the angels' companions, and so it is necessary he should own them before the angels. This will be like a testimonial for them unto the angels. Lastly. The evidences of his right to, and propriety in them, will then be made to appear. Mal. iii. 17: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." It is too late for persons to become his then; so the meaning is, they shall evidently appear to be mine.—*James Scot*, 1773.

Verse 5.—"*Gather my saints together unto me.*" Our text may be considered as the commission given by the great Judge to his angels—those ministering spirits who do his will, hearkening to the voice of his power. The language of the text is in accordance with that which was uttered by our Lord when, alluding to the coming of the Son of Man, he says, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." But previous to this final, this *general* gathering together of his saints to judgment, Jehovah gathers them together in various ways, in various places, and by various means, both of providence and of grace. Previous to his being seated on a throne of judgment, we behold him sitting on a throne of mercy, and we hear him saying, "*Gather my saints together unto me.*" These words lead us to notice—I. The characters described, "*My saints.*" II. The command issued, "*Gather my saints together unto me.*" I. THE CHARACTERS HERE DESCRIBED—"*My saints.*" By the term "*my saints,*" we are to understand *my holy ones*—those who have been sanctified and set apart by God. None of us possess this character by *nature*. We are born sinners, and there is no difference; but by divine *grace* we experience a change of nature, and consequently a change of name. The title of saint is frequently given to the people of God in derision. "Such an one," says a man of the world, "is one of your saints." But, my brethren, no higher honour can be conferred upon us than to be denominated saints, if we truly deserve that character; but in what way do we become saints? We become saints—1. *By divine choice.* The saints are the objects of everlasting love; their names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and it is worthy of remark that wherever the people of God are spoken of in sacred Scripture, as the objects of that everlasting love, it is in connection with their *personal sanctification.* Observe, they are not chosen because they *are* saints, nor because it is foreseen that they *will* be so, but they are chosen *to be* saints; sanctification is the effect and the only evidence of election. We become saints—2. *By a divine change which is the*

necessary consequence of this election. An inward, spiritual, supernatural, universal change is effected in the saints by the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus they are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and made partakers of a divine nature. . . . . Remember, then, this important truth, that Christians are called by the gospel to be saints; that you are Christians, not so much by your *orthodoxy* as by your *holiness;* that you are saints no further than as you are holy in all manner of conversation. 3. *The people of God furnish an evidence of being saints by their godly conduct.* "By their fruits," not by their feelings; not by their lips, not by their general profession, but, "by their fruits shall ye know them." 4. The character of the saints is evidenced *by divine consecration.* The people of God are called holy inasmuch as they are dedicated to God. It is the duty and the privilege of saints to consecrate themselves to the service of God. Even a heathen philosopher could say, "I *lend* myself to the *world*, but I *give* myself to the *gods.*" But we possess more light and knowledge, and are therefore laid under greater obligations than was Seneca.

II. The command issued—"*Gather my saints together unto me.*" Jehovah gathers his saints to himself in various ways. 1. *He gathers them to himself in their conversion.* The commission given by Christ to his ministers is, "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," or in other words, "*Gather my saints together unto me.*" The gospel is to be preached to *sinners* in order that they may become *saints.* 2. *Saints are gathered together by God in public worship.* . . . . 3. *He gathers his saints together to himself in times of danger.* When storms appear to be gathering around them, he is desirous to screen them from the blast. He says to them, in the language of Isaiah, "Come, my people, and enter into thy chamber—the chamber of my perfections and my promises—enter into thy chamber and shut the doors about thee, and hide thyself until the calamity is overpast." 4. *God gathers his saints together in the service of his church.* Thus Christ collected his apostles together to give them their apostolic commission to go and teach all nations. At the period of the Reformation, the great Head of the church raised up Luther and Calvin, together with other eminent reformers, in order that they might light up a flame in Europe, yea, throughout the world, that the breath of popery should never be able to blow out. 5. *God gathers his saints together in death, and at the resurrection.* "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." This is the commission which death is habitually receiving—"Go, death, and gather such-and-such of my saints unto me." As the gardener enters the garden, and plucks the full-blown flower and the ripened fruit, so Jesus Christ enters the garden of his church and gathers his saints to himself; for he says, "Father, I will that all they whom thou hast given me may be with me, where I am, and behold my glory."—*Condensed from J. Sibree's "Sermon preached at the re-opening of Surrey Chapel, August 29th,* 1830."

Verse 5 (*second clause*).—"*Made,*" or, *ratifying a covenant;* literally, *cutting,* striking, perhaps in allusion to the practice of slaying and dividing victims as a religious rite, accompanying solemn compacts. (See Genesis xv. 10—18.) The same usage may be referred to in the following words, *over sacrifice, i.e.*, standing over it; or, *on sacrifice, i.e.*, founding the engagement on a previous appeal to God. There is probably allusion to the great covenant transaction recorded in Ex. xxiv. 4—8. This reference to sacrifice shows clearly that what follows was not intended to discredit or repudiate that essential symbol of the typical or ceremonial system.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 5.—"*Made a covenant with me.*" Formerly soldiers used to take an oath not to flinch from their colours, but faithfully to cleave to their leaders; this they called *sacramentum militare,* a military oath; such an oath lies upon every Christian. It is so essential to the being of a saint, that they are described by this, "*Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me.*" We are not Christians till we have subscribed this covenant, and that without any reservation. When we take upon us the profession of Christ's name, we enlist ourselves in his muster-roll, and by it do promise that we will

live and die with him in opposition to all his enemies. . . . . He will not entertain us till we resign up ourselves freely to his disposal, that there may be no disputing with his commands afterwards, but, as one under his authority, go and come at his word.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 6.—"*The heavens shall declare his righteousness.*" It is the manner of Scripture to commit the teaching of that which it desires should be most noticeable and important to *the heavens and the earth:* for *the heavens* are seen by all, and their light discovers all things. Here it speaks of *the heavens*, not *the earth*, because these are everlasting, but not the earth.—*Geier and Muis, in Pool's Synopsis.*

Verse 8.—"*I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices;*" *i.e.*, for thy neglect of them, but for thy resting in them, sticking in the bark, bringing me the bare shell without the kernel, not referring to the right end and use, but satisfying thyself in the work done.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8.—"*I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings continually before me.*" Those words "*to have been,*" which our translators supply, may be left out, and the sense remain perfect: or if those words be continued, then the negative particle *not*, is to be reassumed out of the first part of the verse, and the whole read thus, "*I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings not to have been continually before me.*" That is, I will not charge thee with a neglect of outward duty or worship, the inward or spiritual (of which he speaks, ver. 14), being that which is most pleasing unto me.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 8, 9.—It is the very remonstrance which our Lord himself makes against the Pharisees of his days, for laying so much stress on the outward observance of their own traditions, the washing of pots and cups and other such like things; the paying of tithes of anise and mint and cummin; the ostentatious fulfilment of all ceremonious observances in the eyes of men, the exalting the shadow to the exclusion of the substance. And have we not seen the like in our own days, even to the very vestment of the minister, the obeisance of the knee, and the posture of the body? as if the material church were all in all, and God were no Spirit, that demanded of those that worshipped him that they should worship him in spirit and in truth; as if the gold and ornaments of the temple were far beyond the hidden man of the heart in that which is incorruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 10.—"*For to me* [belongs] *every beast of the forest, the cattle in hills of a thousand.*" This last idiomatic phrase may either mean a thousand hills, or hills where the cattle rove by thousands, with probable allusion to the hilly grounds of Bashan beyond Jordan. According to etymology, the noun in the first clause means an *animal*, and that in the second *beasts* or *brutes* in general. But when placed in antithesis, the first denotes a wild beast, and the second domesticated animals or cattle. Both words were necessary to express God's sovereign propriety in the whole animal creation. Thus understood, the verse assigns a reason for the negative assertion in the one before it. Even if God could stand in need of animal oblations, for his own sake, or for their sake, he would not be under the necessity of coming to man for them, since the whole animal creation is his property and perfectly at his disposal.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verses 11, 12.—We show our scorn of God's sufficiency, by secret thoughts of meriting from him by any religious act, as though God could be indebted to us, and obliged by us. As though our devotions could bring a blessedness to God more than he essentially hath; when indeed "our goodness extends not to him." Ps. xvi. 2. Our services to God are rather services to ourselves, and

bring a happiness to us, not to God. This secret opinion of merit (though disputed among the Papists, yet) is natural to man ; and this secret self-pleasing, when we have performed any duty, and upon that account expect some fair compensation from God, as having been profitable to him ; God intimates this : "The wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee ; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." He implies, that they wronged his infinite fulness, by thinking that he stood in need of their sacrifices and services, and that he was beholden to them for their adoration of him. All merit implies a moral or natural insufficiency in the person of whom we merit, and our doing something for him, which he could not, or at least so well do for himself. It is implied in our murmuring at God's dealing with us as a course of cross providences, wherein men think they have deserved better at the hands of God by their service, than to be cast aside and degraded by him. In our prosperity we are apt to have secret thoughts that our enjoyments were the debts God owed us, rather than gifts freely bestowed upon us. Hence it is that men are more unwilling to part with their righteousness than with their sins, and are apt to challenge salvation as a due, rather than beg it as an act of grace.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 12.—"*If I were hungry,*" etc. Pagan sacrifices were considered as feasts of the gods.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 13.—"*Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*" That is, did I want anything I would not tell thee ; but hast thou indeed such gross notions of me, as to imagine that I have appointed and required the blood and flesh of animals for their own sake and not with some design ? Dost thou think I am pleased with these, when they are offered without faith, love, and gratitude ? Nay, offer the sacrifice of praise, etc. Render to me a spiritual and reasonable service, performing thy engagements, and then thou wilt find me a very present help in trouble.—*B. Boothroyd.*

Verse 15.—"*Call upon me,*" etc. Prayer is like the ring which Queen Elizabeth gave to the Earl of Essex, bidding him if he were in any distress send that ring to her, and she would help him. God commandeth his people if they be in any perplexity to send this ring to him : "*Call upon me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*"—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 15.—"*Call upon me in the day of trouble,*" etc. Who will scrape to a keeper for a piece of venison who may have free access to the master of the game to ask and have ? Hanker not after other helpers, rely on him only, fully trusting him in the use of such means as he prescribeth and affordeth. God is jealous, will have no co-rival, nor allow thee (in this case) two strings to thy bow. He who worketh all in all must be unto thee all in all ; of, through, and to whom are all things, to him be all praise for ever. Rom. xi. 36.—*George Gipps, in "A Sermon preached (before God, and from him) to the Honourable House of Commons,* 1645."

Verse 15.—"*Call upon me in the day of trouble,*" etc. The Lord hath promised his children supply of all good things, yet they must use the means of impetration ; by prayer. He feeds the young ravens when they call upon him. Ps. cxlvii. 9. He feeds the young ravens, but first they call upon him. God withholds from them that ask not, lest he should give to them that desire not. (Augustine.) David was confident that by God's power he should spring over a wall ; yet not without putting his own strength and agility to it. Those things we pray for, we must work for. (Augustine.) The carter in Isidore, when his cart was overthrown, would needs have his god Hercules come down from heaven, to help him up with it ; but whilst he forbore to set his own shoulder to it, his cart lay still. Abraham was as rich as any of our aldermen, David as valiant as any of our gentlemen, Solomon as wise as any of our deepest naturians, Susanna as fair as any of our painted pieces. Yet none of them thought that their riches, valour, policy, beauty, or excellent parts could save

them ; but they stirred the sparks of grace, and bestirred themselves in pious work. And this is our means, if our meaning be to be saved.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 15.—"*I will deliver thee:*" properly, *I will draw thee forth with my own mighty hand,*" and plant thee in liberty and prosperity.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 16.—"*Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?*" etc. "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool." Is it not? No wonder then that divine wisdom requires us ourselves to put off the old man (as snakes put off their skins) before we take on us the most honourable office of reproving sin ; a duty which above any other brings praise to God, and profit to men ; insomuch that God hath not a more honourable work that I know of to set us about. And what think you? Are greasy scullions fit to stand before kings? Are dirty kennel-rakers fit to be plenipotentiaries or ambassadors? Are unclean beasts fit to be made lord-almoners, and sent to bestow the king's favours? Are swine fit to cast pearl, and the very richest pearl of God's royal word? No man dreams it ; consequently none can believe himself qualified or commissioned to be a reprover of sin "till he is washed, till he is sanctified, till he is justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God." A lunatick beggar in Athens would not believe but that all the ships in the harbour were his. His mistake exceeded not theirs, who persuade themselves that this richer office is theirs, before they are "alive from the dead," and "born of the Spirit," before they are returned to God or to themselves. The Duke of Alva is said to have complained that, 'his king sent him in fetters to fight for him ;' because without his pardon given him, and while he was a prisoner, he employed him in war. But the Supreme King is a more merciful one, and orders our charity to begin at home ; making it our first duty to break off our sins ; and then when we have put off these our shackles, go to fight his battles.—*Daniel Burgess* (1645—1712-13) *in* "*The Golden Snuffers.*"

Verse 16.—"*The wicked.*" By whom are meant, not openly profane sinners ; but men under a profession of religion, and indeed who were teachers of others, as appears from the following expostulations with them : the Scribes, Pharisees, and doctors among the Jews, are designed, and so Kimchi interprets it of their wise men, who learnt and taught the law, but did not act according to it.—*John Gill.*

Verse 16.—"*What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?*" etc. All the mediæval writers teach us, even from the Mosaic law, concerning the leper, how the writer of this Psalm only put into words what those statutes expressed in fact. For so it is written : "The leper in whom the plague is, ... he shall put a covering upon his upper lip." As they all, following Origen, say : Let them who are themselves of polluted lips, take good heed not to teach others. Or, to take it in the opposite way, see how Isaiah would not speak to his people, because he was a man of polluted lips, and he dwelt among a people of polluted lips, till they had been touched with the living coal from the altar ; and by that, as by a sacrament of the Old Testament, a sentence of absolution had been pronounced upon them.—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 16 (*second clause*).—Emphasis is laid on the phrase, *to declare God's statutes*, which both denotes such an accurate knowledge of them as one may obtain by *numbering* them, and a diligent and public review of them. Properly speaking the word is derived from the Arabic, and signifies *to reckon in dust*, for the ancients were accustomed to calculate in *dust* finely sprinkled over tablets or the Abacus.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 16.—"*But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do . . . . to take my covenant into thy mouth?*" For whom is the covenant made but for the wicked? If men were not wicked or sinful, what needed there a covenant of grace? The covenant is for the wicked, and the covenant brings grace enough to pardon those who are most wicked ; why, then, doth the Lord say to the wicked, "*What hast thou to do to take my covenant unto thy mouth?*" Observe

what follows, and his meaning is expounded: "*Seeing thou hatest to be reformed.*" As if God had said, Thou wicked man, who protectest thy sin, and holdest it close, refusing to return and hating to reform; what hast thou to do to meddle with my covenant? Lay off thy defiled hands. He that is resolved to hold his sin takes hold of the covenant in vain, or rather he lets it go, while he seems to hold it. Woe unto those who sue for mercy while they neglect duty.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 16.—When a minister does not do what he teaches, this makes him a vile person; nay, this makes him ridiculous, like Lucian's apothecary, who had medicines in his shop to cure the cough, and told others that he had them, and yet was troubled with it himself. With what a forehead canst thou stand in a pulpit and publish the laws of God, and undertake the charge of souls, that when thine own nakedness appears, when thy tongue is of a larger size than thy hands, thy ministry is divided against itself, thy courses give thy doctrine the lie; thou sayest that men must be holy, and thy deeds do declare thy mouth's hypocrisy; thou doest more mischief than a hundred others.—*William Fenner.*

Verse 17.—"*And castest my words behind thee.*" *Thou castest away contemptuously*, with disgust and detestation, as idols are cast out of a city; or as Moses indignantly dashed to the earth the tables of the law.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 17.—"*My words:*" apparently the ten commandments, accustomed to be called the *ten words*, by which God is often said to have made his covenant with Israel.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 18.—"*When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him;*" or *didst run with him.* This was literally true of the Scribes and Pharisees; they devoured widows' houses, and robbed them of their substance, under a pretext of long prayers; they consented to the deeds of Barabbas, a robber, when they preferred him to Jesus Christ; and they joined with the thieves on the cross in reviling him; and, in a spiritual sense, they stole away the word of the Lord, every man from his neighbour; took away the key of knowledge from the people, and put false glosses upon the sacred writings.—*John Gill.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou consentedst with him;*" *became his accomplice.* Συνέτρεχες αὐτῷ, LXX, *i.e.*, you helped him to carry off his booty and to make his escape.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou consentedst with him.*" Or, thou runnest along with him. "*Hast been partaker with;*" namely, thou art his companion; a term taken from commerce of merchants, or from banquets made after the ancient manner, to which divers did contribute, and had their shares therein.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 18 (*last clause*).—To give entertainment to them we know to be dissolute, is to communicate with their sins.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 19.—"*Thou givest thy mouth to evil,*" etc. "*Thou givest.*" Heb., *thou sendest forth;* to wit, free; for the word is used of men's dismissing their wives or their servants, whom they left to their freedom. Thou hast an unbridled tongue, and castest off all restraints of God's law, and of thine own conscience, and givest thy tongue liberty to speak what thou pleasest, though it be offensive and dishonourable to God, and injurious to thy neighbour, or to thy own soul; which is justly produced as an evidence of their hypocrisy. "*To evil,*" either to sinful or mischievous speeches. "*Frameth deceit,*" *i.e.*, uttereth lies or fair words, wherewith to circumvent those who deal with them.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 19.—The ninth commandment is now added to the other two, as being habitually violated by the person here addressed.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 20.—"*Thou sittest and speakest,*" etc. A man may both speak and do evil while he sits still and doth nothing; an idle posture may serve the turn for such work as that.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 20.—"*Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother,*" etc. When you are sitting still, and have nothing else to do, you are ever injuring your neighbour with your slanderous speech. Your table-talk is abuse of your nearest friends.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 20.—"*Thine own mother's son.*" To understand the force of this expression, it is necessary to bear in mind that polygamy was allowed amongst the Israelites. Those who were born to the same father were all brethren, but a yet more intimate relationship subsisted between those who had the same mother as well as the same father.—*French and Skinner.*

Verse 21.—"*These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.*" Neither sleep nor slumber, nor connivance, nor neglect of anything can be incident to God. Because he doth not execute present judgment and visible destruction upon sinners, therefore blasphemy presumptuously inferreth—will God trouble himself about such petty matters? So they imagined of their imaginary Jupiter. *Non vacat exiguis rebus adesse Jovem.* What a narrow and finite apprehension this is of God! He that causeth and produceth every action—shall he not be present at every action? What can we do without him, that cannot move but in him? He that takes notice of sparrows, and numbers the seeds which the very ploughman thrusts in the ground, can any action of man escape his knowledge, or slip from his contemplation? He may seem to wink at things, but never shuts his eyes. He doth not always manifest a reprehensive knowledge, yet he always retains an apprehensive knowledge. Though David smote not Shimei cursing, yet he heard Shimei cursing. As judges often determine to hear, but do not hear to determine; so though God does not see to like, yet he likes to see.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 21.—"*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" Such is the blindness and corruption of our nature, that we have very deformed and misshapen thoughts of him, till with the eye of faith we see his face in the glass of the word; and therefore Mr. Perkins affirms, that all men who ever came of Adam (Christ alone excepted) are by nature atheists; because at the same time that they acknowledge God, they deny his power, presence, and justice, and allow him to be only what pleaseth themselves. Indeed, it is natural for every man to desire to accommodate his lusts with such conception of God as may be most favourable to and suit best with them. God charges some for this: "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" Sinners do with God as the Ethiopians do with angels, whom they picture with black faces that they may be like themselves.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 21.—"*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" This men do when they plead for sins as little, as venial, as that which is below God to take notice of; because they themselves think it so, therefore God must think it so too. Man, with a giant-like pride, would climb into the throne of the Almighty, and establish a contradiction to the will of God by making his own will, and not God's, the square and rule of his actions. This principle commenced and took date in Paradise, when Adam would not depend upon the will of God revealed to him, but upon himself and his own will, and thereby makes himself as God.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 21.—"*I will set them in order before thine eyes.*" This is to be understood *more militari*, when sins shall be set in rank and file, in bloody array against thy soul; or *more forensi*, when they shall be set in order as so many indictments for thy rebellion and treason.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 21.—"*And set them in order before thine eyes:*" as if he should say, Thou thoughtest all thy sins were scattered and dispersed; that there was not a sin to be found; that they should never be rallied and brought together; but I assure thee I will make an army of those sins, a complete army of them, I will set them in rank and file before thine eyes; and see how thou canst behold, much less contend with, such an host as they. Take heed therefore you do not levy war against your own souls; that's the worst of all civil or

intestine wars. If an army of divine terrors be so fearful, what will an army of black, hellish sins be? when God shall bring whole regiments of sins against you—here a regiment of oaths, there a regiment of lies, there a third of false dealings, here a troop of filthy actions, and there a legion of unclean or profane thoughts, all at once fighting against thy life and everlasting peace.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 21.—Atheists do mock at those Scriptures which tell us that we shall give account of all our deeds; but God shall make them find the truth of it in that day of their reckoning. It is as easy for him to make their forgetful minds remember as to create the minds in them. When he applieth his register to their forgetful spirits they shall see all their forgotten sins. When the printer presseth clean paper upon his oiled irons, it receiveth the print of every letter: so when God shall stamp their minds with his register, they shall see all their former sins in a view. The hand was ever writing against Belshazzar, as he was ever sinning, though he saw it not till the cup was filled: so is it to the wicked; their sins are numbered, and themselves weighed, and see not till they be divided by a fearful wakening.—*William Struther.*

Verse 21 (*last clause*).—"*God setteth his sins in order before his eyes.*" *Imprimis*, the sin of his conception. *Item*, the sins of his childhood. *Item*, of his youth. *Item*, of his man's estate, etc. Or, *Imprimis*, sins against the first table. *Item*, sins against the second; so many of ignorance, so many of knowledge, so many of presumption, severally sorted by themselves. He committed sins confusedly, huddling them up in heaps; but God *sets them in order*, and methodizes them to his hands.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 22.—"*Now consider this, ye that forget God,*" etc. What is less than a grain of sand? Yet when it comes to be multiplied, what is heavier than the sands of the sea? A little sum multiplied rises high; so a little sin unrepented of will damn us, as one leak in the ship, if it be not well looked to, will drown us. "Little sins," as the world calls them, but great sins against the majesty of God Almighty, whose majesty, against which they are committed, doth accent and enhance them, if not repented of, will damn. One would think it no great matter *to forget God*, yet it has *a heavy doom* attending on it. The non-improvement of talents, the non-exercise of grace, the world looks upon as a small thing; yet we read of him who *hid* his talent in the earth—he had not spent it, only not trading it is sentenced.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 22.—"*Lest I tear you in pieces.*" This is a metaphorical expression, taken from the strength and irresistible fury of a lion, from which the interference of the shepherd can supply no protection, or defence, for his flock.—*William Walford.*

Verse 23.—"*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.*" Thanksgiving is a God-exalting work. Though nothing can add the least cubit to God's essential glory, yet praise exalts him in the eyes of others. Praise is a setting forth of God's honour, a lifting up of his name, a displaying the trophy of his goodness, a proclaiming his excellency, a spreading his renown, a breaking open the box of ointment, whereby the sweet savour and perfume of God's name is sent abroad into the world. "*To him that ordereth his conversation aright.*" Though the main work of religion lies within, yet "our light must so shine," that others may behold it; the foundation of sincerity is in the heart, yet its beautiful frontispiece appears in the conversation. The saints are called "jewels," because they cast a sparkling lustre in the eyes of others. An upright Christian is like Solomon's temple, gold within and without: sincerity is a holy leaven, which if it be in the *heart* will work itself into the life, and make it swell and rise as high as heaven. Phil. iii. 20.—*Thomas Watson.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—It unspeakably concerns *all* men to know what God has spoken.—*W. S. Plumer.*

Verse 1.—I. Who has spoken? The Mighty, not men or angels, but God himself. II. To whom has he spoken? To all nations—all ranks—all characters. This calls for, 1. Reverence—it is the voice of God. 2. Hope—because he condescends to speak to rebels. III. Where has he spoken? 1. In creation. 2. In providence. 3. In his word.—*G. R.*

Verses 1—6.—I. The court called in the name of the King of kings. II. The judgment set, and the judge taking his seat; v. 2, 3. III. The parties summoned: v. 8. IV. The issue of this solemn trial foretold; v. 6.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 1—15.—I. God's call to man. II. Man's call to God.

Verse 2.—I. The internal beauty of Zion. 1. *Positive* beauty of wisdom—holiness—love. 2. *Comparative* with the beauty of Paradise and the heaven of angels. 3. *Superlative*—all the perfections of God combined. II. Its external glory. Out of it God hath shined. 1. On this world. 2. On gracious souls. 3. On angels who desire to look, etc. 4. On the universe. "All the creatures heard I," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—I. What God will do for his people. He will judge them. 1. Deliver. 2. Defend. 3. Uphold. II. The means at his disposal for this purpose. "He shall call," etc.—heaven and earth are subservient to him for the good of his church.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—The judgment of the visible church. It will be by God himself, public, searching—with fire and wind, exact, final.

Verse 5.—The great family gathering. I. Who are gathered. II. How they are gathered. III. To whom. IV. When they are gathered.

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—I. The covenant. II. The sacrifice which ratifies it. III. How we may be said to make it.

Verse 6 (*last clause*).—Then slander will not pervert the sentence, undue severity will not embitter it, partiality will not excuse, falsehood will not deceive, justice will surely be done.

Verse 7.—Sins of God's people specially against God, and only known to God. A searching subject.

Verses 13—15.—What sacrifices are not, and what are acceptable with God.

Verse 15.—I. The occasion—"trouble." II. The command—"call upon me." III. The promise—"I will deliver thee." IV. The design—"thou shalt," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 15.—"*Thou shalt glorify me.*" This we do by praying, and by praising when prayer is heard; as also by confidence in his promises, submission to his chastisements, concern for his honour, attachment to his cause, affection to his people, and by continual obedience to his commands.

Verse 15.—I. A special invitation as to person and time. II. Special promise to those accepting it. III. Special duty involved when the promise is fulfilled.

Verses 16, 17.—I. The prohibition given. 1. The prohibited *things*—"declare my statutes." "Take my covenant," etc. (1.) Preaching. (2.) Teaching, as in Sunday-schools. (3.) Praying. (4.) Attending ordinances. 2. Prohibited *persons*. Wicked preachers, etc., while they continue in wickedness. II. The reason assigned; v. 17. 1. No self-application of the truth. 2. Inward hatred of it. 3. Outward rejection.—*G. R.*

Verse 17.—I. *The fatal sign.* 1. Hating to be taught. 2. Hating what is taught. II. *What it indicates.* 1. Pride. 2. Contempt of God. 3. Indifference to truth. 4. Atheism at heart. 5. Deadness of conscience. III. *What it leads to.* See verse 22.

Verses 17, 18.—Rejection of salutary instruction leads sooner or later to open transgression. Instances, reasons, inferential warnings.

Verses 20, 21.—I. Man speaking and God silent. II. God speaking and man silent.

Verse 21.—I. God leaves men for a time to themselves. II. They judge of God on this account by themselves. III. He will in due time reveal their whole selves to themselves. "I will reprove," etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 21, 23.—Note the alternative; a life rightly ordered now, or sins set in order hereafter.

Verse 22.—I. The accusation—"Ye that forget God," his omniscience, his power, his justice, his goodness, his mercy, his word, his great salvation. II. The admonition—"Consider this," rouse yourselves from your forgetfulness into serious reflection. III. The condemnation—"Lest," etc. 1. The awfulness. "Tear," as a lion or eagle its prey—tear body and soul. 2. Its irresistibleness—"None to deliver."—*G. R.*

Verse 23.—I. Salvation is the work of God. II. The evidence of salvation is holiness of heart and life. III. The effect of that evidence is praise. IV. The tendency of that praise is to glorify God. God is not glorified by the doubts, and fears, and murmurings of his people, but by their praise.—*G. R.*

Verse 23 (*last clause*).—The true order of life. I. That first which is first. II. That most which is most. III. That ever which is ever. IV. That all which is all.

WORK UPON THE FIFTIETH PSALM.

In the old quarto edition (1634) of "*Mr. Paul Bayne's Commentary on Colossians*," among the "*divers places of Scripture briefely explained*," there is an exposition of verses 21, 22, 23, of this Psalm, entitled, "*The Terror of God displayed against carnal security.*"

PSALM LI.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician. *Therefore not written for private meditation only, but for the public service of song. Suitable for the loneliness of individual penitence this matchless Psalm is equally well adapted for an assembly of the poor in spirit.* A Psalm of David. *It is a marvel, but nevertheless a fact, that writers have been found to deny David's authorship of this Psalm, but their objections are frivolous, the Psalm is David-like all over. It would be far easier to imitate Milton, Shakspeare, or Tennyson, than David. His style is altogether* sui generis, *and it is as easily distinguishable as the touch of Rafaelle or the colouring of Rubens.* "When Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba." *When the divine message had aroused his dormant conscience and made him see the greatness of his guilt, he wrote this Psalm. He had forgotten his psalmody while he was indulging his flesh, but he returned to his harp when his spiritual nature was awakened, and he poured out his song to the accompaniment of sighs and tears. The great sin of David is not to be excused, but it is well to remember that his case has an exceptional collection of specialities in it. He was a man of very strong passions, a soldier, and an Oriental monarch having despotic power; no other king of his time would have felt any compunction for having acted as he did, and hence there were not around him those restraints of custom and association which, when broken through, render the offence the more monstrous. He never hints at any form of extenuation, nor do we mention these facts in order to apologise for his sin, which was detestable to the last degree; but for the warning of others, that they reflect that the licentiousness in themselves at this day might have even a graver guilt in it than in the erring King of Israel. When we remember his sin, let us dwell most upon his penitence, and upon the long series of chastisements which rendered the after part of his life such a mournful history.*

DIVISIONS. *It will be simplest to note in the first twelve verses the penitent's confessions and plea for pardon, and then in the last seven his anticipatory gratitude, and the way in which he resolves to display it.*

EXPOSITION.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

1. "*Have mercy upon me, O God.*" He appeals at once to the mercy of God, even before he mentions his sin. The sight of mercy is good for eyes that are sore with penitential weeping. Pardon of sin must ever be an act of pure mercy, and therefore to that attribute the awakened sinner flies. "*According to thy lovingkindness.*" Act, O Lord, like thyself ; give mercy like thy mercy. Show mercy such as is congruous with thy grace.

> "Great God, thy nature hath no bound :
> So let thy pardoning love be found."

What a choice word is that of our English version, a rare compound of precious things : love and kindness sweetly blended in one—"lovingkindness." "*According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies.*" Let thy most loving compassions come to me, and make thou thy pardons such as these would suggest. Reveal all thy gentlest attributes in my case, not only in their essence but in their abundance. Numberless have been thine acts of goodness, and vast is thy grace ; let me be the object of thine infinite mercy, and repeat it all in me. Make my one case an epitome of all thy tender mercies. By every deed of grace to others I feel encouraged, and I pray thee let me add another and a yet greater one, in my own person, to the long list of thy compassions. "*Blot out my transgressions.*" My revolts, my excesses, are all recorded against me ; but, Lord, erase the lines. Draw thy pen through the register. Obliterate the record, though now it seems engraven in the rock for ever ; many strokes of thy mercy may be needed, to cut out the deep inscription, but then thou hast a multitude of mercies, and therefore, I beseech thee, erase my sins.

2. "*Wash me throughly.*" It is not enough to blot out the sin ; his person is defiled, and he fain would be purified. He would have God himself cleanse him, for none but he could do it effectually. The washing must be thorough, it must be repeated, therefore he cries, "Multiply to wash me." The dye is in itself immovable, and I, the sinner, have lain long in it, till the crimson is ingrained ; but, Lord, wash, and wash, and wash again, till the last stain is gone, and not a trace of my defilement is left. The hypocrite is content if his garments be washed ; but the true suppliant cries, "wash *me.*" The careless soul is content with a nominal cleansing, but the truly-awakened conscience desires a real and practical washing, and that of a most complete and efficient kind. "*Wash me throughly from mine iniquity.*" It is viewed as one great pollution, polluting the entire nature, and as all his own ; as if nothing were so much his own as his sin. The one sin against Bathsheba, served to show the psalmist the whole mountain of his iniquity, of which that foul deed was but one falling stone. He desires to be rid of the whole mass of his filthiness, which though once so little observed, had then become a hideous and haunting terror to his mind. "*And cleanse me from my sin.*" This is a more general expression ; as if the psalmist said, "Lord, if washing will not do, try some other process ; if water avails not, let fire, let anything be tried, so that I may but be purified. Rid me of my sin by some means, by any means, by every means, only do purify me completely, and leave no guilt upon my soul." It is not the punishment he cries out against, but the sin. Many a murderer is more alarmed at the gallows than at the murder which brought him to it. The thief loves the plunder, though he fears the prison. Not so David : he is sick of sin as sin ; his loudest outcries are against the evil of his transgression, and not against the

painful consequences of it. When we deal seriously with our sin, God will deal gently with us. When we hate what the Lord hates, he will soon make an end of it, to our joy and peace.

3. "*For I acknowledge my transgressions.*" Here he sees the plurality and immense number of his sins, and makes open declaration of them. He seems to say, I make a full confession of them. Not that this is my plea in seeking forgiveness, but it is a clear evidence that I need mercy, and am utterly unable to look to any other quarter for help. My pleading guilty has barred me from any appeal against the sentence of justice: O Lord, I must cast myself on thy mercy, refuse me not, I pray thee. Thou hast made me willing to confess. O follow up this work of grace with a full and free remission! "*And my sin is ever before me.*" My sin as a whole is never out of my mind; it continually oppresses my spirit. I lay it before thee because it is ever before me: Lord, put it away both from thee and me. To an awakened conscience, pain on account of sin is not transient and occasional, but intense and permanent, and this is no sign of divine wrath, but rather a sure preface of abounding favour.

4. "*Against thee, thee only have I sinned.*" The virus of sin lies in its opposition to God: the psalmist's sense of sin towards others rather tended to increase the force of this feeling of sin against God. All his wrong-doing centred, culminated, and came to a climax, at the foot of the divine throne. To injure our fellow men is sin, mainly because in so doing we violate the law of God. The penitent's heart was so filled with a sense of the wrong done to the Lord himself, that all other confession was swallowed up in a broken-hearted acknowledgment of offence against him. "*And done this evil in thy sight.*" To commit treason in the very court of the king and before his eye is impudence indeed: David felt that his sin was committed in all its filthiness while Jehovah himself looked on. None but a child of God cares for the eye of God, but where there is grace in the soul it reflects a fearful guilt upon every evil act, when we remember that the God whom we offend was present when the trespass was committed. "*That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*" He could not present any argument against divine justice, if it proceeded at once to condemn him and punish him for his crime. His own confession, and the judge's own witness of the whole transaction, placed the transgression beyond all question or debate; the iniquity was indisputably committed, and was unquestionably a foul wrong, and therefore the course of justice was clear and beyond all controversy.

5. "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.*" He is thunderstruck at the discovery of his inbred sin, and proceeds to set it forth. This was not intended to justify himself, but it rather meant to complete the confession. It is as if he said, not only have I sinned this once, but I am in my very nature a sinner. The fountain of my life is polluted as well as its streams. My birth-tendencies are out of the square of equity; I naturally lean to forbidden things. Mine is a constitutional disease, rendering my very person obnoxious to thy wrath. "*And in sin did my mother conceive me.*" He goes back to the earliest moment of his being, not to traduce his mother, but to acknowledge the deep tap-roots of his sin. It is a wicked wresting of Scripture to deny that original sin and natural depravity are here taught. Surely men who cavil at this doctrine have need to be taught of the Holy Spirit what be the first principles of the faith. David's mother was the Lord's handmaid, he was born in chaste wedlock, of a good father, and he was himself "the man after God's own heart;" and yet his nature was as fallen as that of any other son of Adam, and there only needed the occasion for the manifesting of that sad fact. In our shaping we were put out of shape, and when we were conceived our nature conceived sin. Alas, for poor humanity! Those who will may cry it up, but he is most blessed who in his own soul has learned to lament his lost estate.

6. "*Behold.*" Here is the great matter for consideration. God desires not merely outward virtue, but inward purity, and the penitent's sense of sin is

greatly deepened as with astonishment he discovers this truth, and how far he is from satisfying the divine demand. The second "Behold" is fitly set over against the first; how great the gulf which yawns between them! "*Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.*" Reality, sincerity, true holiness, heart-fidelity, these are the demands of God. He cares not for the pretence of purity, he looks to the mind, heart, and soul. Always has the Holy One of Israel estimated men by their inner nature, and not by their outward professions; to him the inward is as visible as the outward, and he rightly judges that the essential character of an action lies in the motive of him who works it. "*And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" The penitent feels that God is teaching him truth concerning his nature, which he had not before perceived. The love of the heart, the mystery of its fall, and the way of its purification—this hidden wisdom we must all attain; and it is a great blessing to be able to believe that the Lord will "make us to know it." No one can teach our innermost nature but the Lord, but he can instruct us to profit. The Holy Spirit can write the law on our heart, and that is the sum of practical wisdom. He can put the fear of the Lord within, and that is the beginning of wisdom. He can reveal Christ in us, and he is essential wisdom. Such poor, foolish, disarranged souls as ours, shall yet be ordered aright, and truth and wisdom shall reign within us.

7. "*Purge me with hyssop.*" Sprinkle the atoning blood upon me with the appointed means. Give me the reality which legal ceremonies symbolise. Nothing but blood can take away my blood-stains, nothing but the strongest purification can avail to cleanse me. Let the sin-offering purge my sin. Let him who was appointed to atone, execute his sacred office on me; for none can need it more than I. The passage may be read as the voice of faith as well as a prayer, and so it runs—"Thou wilt purge me with hyssop, *and I shall be clean.*" Foul as I am, there is such power in the divine propitiation, that my sin shall vanish quite away. Like the leper upon whom the priest has performed the cleansing rites, I shall be again admitted into the assembly of thy people and allowed to share in the privileges of the true Israel; while in thy sight also, through Jesus my Lord, I shall be accepted. "*Wash me.*" Let it not merely be in type that I am clean, but by a real spiritual purification, which shall remove the pollution of my nature. Let the sanctifying as well as the pardoning process be perfected in me. Save me from the evils which my sin has created and nourished in me. "*And I shall be whiter than snow.*" None but thyself can whiten me, but thou canst in grace outdo nature itself in its purest state. Snow soon gathers smoke and dust, it melts and disappears; thou canst give me an enduring purity. Though snow is white below as well as on the surface, thou canst work the like inward purity in me, and make me so clean that only an hyperbole can set forth my immaculate condition. Lord, do this; my faith believes thou wilt, and well she knows thou canst.

Scarcely does Holy Scripture contain a verse more full of faith than this. Considering the nature of the sin, and the deep sense the psalmist had of it, it is a glorious faith to be able to see in the blood sufficient, nay, all-sufficient merit entirely to purge it away. Considering also the deep natural inbred corruption which David saw and experienced within, it is a miracle of faith that he could rejoice in the hope of perfect purity in his inward parts. Yet, be it added, the faith is no more than the word warrants, than the blood of atonement encourages, than the promise of God deserves. O that some reader may take heart, even now while smarting under sin, to do the Lord the honour to rely thus confidently on the finished sacrifice of Calvary and the infinite mercy there revealed.

8. "*Make me to hear joy and gladness.*" He prays about his sorrow late in the Psalm; he began at once with his sin; he asks to hear pardon, and then to hear joy. He seeks comfort at the right time and from the right source. His ear has become heavy with sinning, and so he prays, "Make me to hear." No voice could revive his dead joys but that which quickeneth the dead.

Pardon from God would give him double joy—"joy and gladness." No stinted bliss awaits the forgiven one; he shall not only *have* a double-blooming joy, but he shall *hear* it; it shall sing with exultation. Some joy is felt but not heard, for it contends with fears; but the joy of pardon has a voice louder than the voice of sin. God's voice speaking peace is the sweetest music an ear can hear. "*That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*" He was like a poor wretch whose bones are crushed, crushed by no ordinary means, but by omnipotence itself. He groaned under no mere flesh wounds; his firmest and yet tenderest powers were "broken in pieces all asunder;" his manhood had become a dislocated, mangled, quivering sensibility. Yet if he who crushed would cure, every wound would become a new mouth for song, every bone quivering before with agony would become equally sensible of intense delight. The figure is bold, and so is the supplicant. He is requesting a great thing; he seeks joy for a sinful heart, music for crushed bones. Preposterous prayer anywhere but at the throne of God! Preposterous there most of all but for the cross where Jehovah Jesus bore our sins in his own body on the tree. A penitent need not ask to be an hired servant, or settle down in despairing content with perpetual mourning; he may ask for gladness and he shall have it; for if when prodigals return the father is glad, and the neighbors and friends rejoice and are merry with music and dancing, what need can there be that the restored one himself should be wretched?

9. "*Hide thy face from my sins.*" Do not look at them; be at pains not to see them. They thrust themselves in thy way; but, Lord, refuse to behold them, lest if thou consider them, thine anger burn, and I die. "*Blot out all mine iniquities.*" He repeats the prayer of the first verse with the enlargement of it by the word "all." All repetitions are not "vain repetitions." Souls in agony have no space to find variety of language: pain has to content itself with monotones. David's face was ashamed with looking on his sin, and no diverting thoughts could remove it from his memory; but he prays the Lord to do with his sin what he himself cannot. If God hide not his face from our sin, he must hide it forever from us; and if he blot not out our sins, he must blot our names out of his book of life.

10. "*Create.*" What! has sin so destroyed us, that the Creator must be called in again? What ruin then doth evil work among mankind! "*Create in me.*" I, in my outward fabric, still exist; but I am empty, desert, void. Come, then, and let thy power be seen in a new creation within my old fallen self. Thou didst make a man in the world at first; Lord, make a new man in me! "*A clean heart.*" In the seventh verse he asked to be clean; now he seeks a heart suitable to that cleanliness; but he does not say, "Make my old heart clean;" he is too experienced in the hopelessness of the old nature. He would have the old man buried as a dead thing, and a new creation brought in to fill its place. None but God can create either a new heart or a new earth. Salvation is a marvellous display of supreme power; the work *in* us as much as that *for* us is wholly of Omnipotence. The affections must be rectified first, or all our nature will go amiss. The heart is the rudder of the soul, and till the Lord take it in hand we steer in a false and foul way. O Lord, thou who didst once make me, be pleased to new make me, and in my most secret parts renew me. "*Renew a right spirit within me.*" It was there once, Lord, put it there again. The law on my heart has become like an inscription hard to read: new write it, gracious Maker. Remove the evil as I have entreated thee; but, O replace it with good, lest into my swept, empty, and garnished heart, from which the devil has gone out for a while, seven other spirits more wicked than the first should enter and dwell. The two sentences make a complete prayer. "*Create*" what is not there at all; "*renew*" that which is there, but in a sadly feeble state.

11. "*Cast me not away from thy presence.*" Throw me not away as worthless; banish me not, like Cain, from thy face and favour. Permit me to sit among those who share thy love, though I only be suffered to keep the door. I

deserve to be forever denied admission to thy courts; but, O good Lord, permit me still the privilege which is dear as life itself to me. "*Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*" Withdraw not his comforts, counsels, assistances, quickenings, else I am indeed as a dead man. Do not leave me as thou didst Saul, when neither by Urim, nor by prophet, nor by dream, thou wouldst answer him. Thy Spirit is my wisdom, leave me not to my folly; he is my strength, O desert me not to my own weakness. Drive me not away from thee, neither do thou go away from me. Keep up the union between us, which is my only hope of salvation. It will be a great wonder if so pure a spirit deigns to stay in so base a heart as mine; but then, Lord, it is all wonder together, therefore do this, for thy mercy's sake, I earnestly entreat thee.

12. "*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.*" Salvation he had known, and had known it as the Lord's own; he had also felt the joy which arises from being saved in the Lord, but he had lost it for a while, and therefore he longed for its restoration. None but God can give back this joy; he can do it; we may ask it; he will do it for his own glory and our benefit. This joy comes not first, but follows pardon and purity: in such order it is safe, in any other it is vain presumption or idiotic delirium. "*And uphold me with thy free Spirit.*" Conscious of weakness, mindful of having so lately fallen, he seeks to be kept on his feet by power superior to his own. That royal Spirit, whose holiness is true dignity, is able to make us walk as kings and priests, in all the uprightness of holiness; and he will do so if we seek his gracious upholding. Such influences will not enslave but emancipate us; for holiness is liberty, and the Holy Spirit is a free Spirit. In the roughest and most treacherous ways we are safe with such a keeper; in the best paths we stumble if left to ourselves. The praying for joy and upholding go well together; it is all over with joy if the foot is not kept; and, on the other hand, joy is a very upholding thing, and greatly aids holiness; meanwhile, the free, noble, royal Spirit is at the bottom of both.

13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it:* thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

13. "*Then will I teach transgressors thy ways.*" It was his fixed resolve to be a teacher of others; and assuredly none instruct others so well as those who have been experimentally taught of God themselves. Reclaimed poachers make the best gamekeepers. Huntingdon's degree of S.S., or Sinner Saved, is more needful for a soul-winning evangelist than either M.A. or D.D. The pardoned sinner's matter will be good, for he has been taught in the school of experience, and his manner will be telling, for he will speak sympathetically, as one who has felt what he declares. The audience the psalmist would choose is memorable—he would instruct transgressors like himself; others might despise them, but,

"a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind." If unworthy to edify saints, he would creep in along with the sinners, and humbly tell them of divine love. The mercy of God to one is an illustration of his usual procedure, so that our own case helps us to understand his "ways," or his general modes of action: perhaps, too, David under that term refers to the preceptive part of the word of God, which, having broken, and having suffered thereby, he felt that he could vindicate and urge upon the reverence of other offenders. "*And sinners shall be converted unto thee.*" My fall shall be the restoration of others. Thou wilt bless my pathetic testimony to the recovery of many who, like myself, have turned aside unto crooked ways. Doubtless this Psalm and the whole story of David, have produced for many ages the most salutary results in the conversion of transgressors, and so evil has been overruled for good.

14. "*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness.*" He had been the means of the death of Uriah, the Hittite, a faithful and attached follower, and he now confesses that fact. Besides, his sin of adultery was a capital offence, and he puts himself down as one worthy to die the death. Honest penitents do not fetch a compass and confess their sins in an elegant periphrasis, but they come to the point, call a spade a spade, and make a clean breast of all. What other course is rational in dealing with the Omniscient? "*O God, thou God of my salvation.*" He had not ventured to come so near before. It had been, "*O God,*" up till now, but here he cries, "*Thou God of my salvation.*" Faith grows by the exercise of prayer. He confesses sin more plainly in this verse than before, and yet he deals with God more confidently: growing upward and downward at the same time are perfectly consistent. None but the King can remit the death penalty, it is therefore a joy to faith that God is King, and that he is the author and finisher of our salvation. "*And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*" One would rather have expected him to say, I will sing of thy mercy; but David can see the divine way of justification, that righteousness of God which Paul afterwards spoke of by which the ungodly are justified, and he vows to sing, yea, and to sing lustily of that righteous way of mercy. After all, it is the righteousness of divine mercy which is its greatest wonder. Note how David would preach in the last verse, and now here he would sing. We can never do too much for the Lord to whom we owe more than all. If we could be preacher, precentor, doorkeeper, pewopener, footwasher, and all in one, all would be too little to show forth all our gratitude. A great sinner pardoned makes a great singer. Sin has a loud voice, and so should our thankfulness have. We shall not sing our own praises if we be saved, but our theme will be the Lord our righteousness, in whose merits we stand righteously accepted.

15. "*O Lord, open thou my lips.*" He is so afraid of himself that he commits his whole being to the divine care, and fears to speak till the Lord unstops his shame-silenced mouth. How marvellously the Lord can open our lips, and what divine things can we poor simpletons pour forth under his inspiration! This prayer of a penitent is a golden petition for a preacher, Lord, I offer it for myself and my brethren. But it may stand in good stead any one whose shame for sin makes him stammer in his prayers, and when it is fully answered, the tongue of the dumb begins to sing. "*And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*" If God opens the mouth he is sure to have the fruit of it. According to the porter at the gate is the nature of that which comes out of man's lips; when vanity, anger, falsehood, or lust unbar the door, the foulest villanies troop out; but if the Holy Spirit opens the wicket, then grace, mercy, peace, and all the graces come forth in tuneful dances, like the daughters of Israel when they met David returning with the Philistine's head.

16. "*For thou desirest not sacrifice.*" This was the subject of the last Psalm. The psalmist was so illuminated as to see far beyond the symbolic ritual; his eye of faith gazed with delight upon the actual atonement. "*Else would I give it.*" He would have been glad enough to present tens of thousands of

victims if these would have met the case. Indeed, anything which the Lord prescribed he would cheerfully have rendered. We are ready to give up all we have if we may but be cleared of our sins; and when sin is pardoned our joyful gratitude is prepared for any sacrifice. "*Thou delightest not in burnt offering.*" He knew that no form of burnt sacrifice was a satisfactory propitiation. His deep soul-need made him look from the type to the antitype, from the external rite to the inward grace.

17. "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.*" All sacrifices are presented to thee in one, by the man whose broken heart presents the Saviour's merit to thee. When the heart mourns for sin, thou art better pleased than when the bullock bleeds beneath the axe. "A broken heart" is an expression implying deep sorrow, embittering the very life; it carries in it the idea of all but killing anguish in that region which is so vital as to be the very source of life. So excellent is a spirit humbled and mourning for sin, that it is not only a sacrifice, but it has a plurality of excellences, and is pre-eminently God's "*sacrifices.*" "*A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*" A heart crushed is a fragrant heart. Men contemn those who are contemptible in their own eyes, but the Lord seeth not as man seeth. He despises what men esteem, and values that which they despise. Never yet has God spurned a lowly, weeping penitent, and never will he while God is love, and while Jesus is called the man who receiveth sinners. Bullocks and rams he desires not, but contrite hearts he seeks after; yea, but one of them is better to him than all the varied offerings of the old Jewish sanctuary.

18. "*Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion.*" Let blessings according to thy wont be poured upon thy holy hill and chosen city. Zion was David's favourite spot, whereon he had hoped to erect a temple. The ruling passion is so strong on him, that when he has discharged his conscience he must have a word for Zion. He felt he had hindered the project of honouring the Lord there as he desired, but he prayed God still to let the place of his ark be glorious, and to establish his worship and his worshipping people. "*Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*" This had been one of David's schemes, to wall in the holy city, and he desires to see it completed; but we believe he had a more spiritual meaning, and prayed for the prosperity of the Lord's cause and people. He had done mischief by his sin, and had, as it were, pulled down her walls; he, therefore, implores the Lord to undo the evil, and establish his church. God can make his cause to prosper, and in answer to prayer he will do so. Without his building we labour in vain; therefore are we the more instant and constant in prayer. There is surely no grace in us if we do not feel for the church of God, and take a lasting interest in its welfare.

19. In those days of joyful prosperity thy saints shall present in great abundance the richest and holiest thank offerings to thee, and thou shalt be pleased to accept them. A saved soul expects to see its prayers answered in a revived church, and then is assured that God will be greatly glorified. Though we bring no more sacrifices for sin, yet as priests unto God our solemn praises and votive gifts are thank offerings acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We bring not the Lord our least things—our doves and pigeons; but we present him with our best possessions—our bullocks. We are glad that in this present time we are able to fulfil in person the declaration of this verse: we also, forecasting the future, wait for days of the divine presence, when the church of God, with unspeakable joy, shall offer gifts upon the altar of God, which will far eclipse anything beheld in these less enthusiastic days. Hasten it, O Lord.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*After he had gone in to Bathsheba.*" This was the devil's nest-egg that caused many sins to be laid, one to, and upon another. See the woful chain of David's lust, 2 Sam. xi. and xii.—*John Trapp.*

Title.—"*When Nathan the prophet came unto him as he* (*i.e.*, David) *had come unto Bathsheba.*" The significant repetition of the phrase *came unto*, is lost in the English and most other versions. "*As*" is not a mere particle of time, simply equivalent to *when*, but suggests the idea of analogy, proportion, and retaliation.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is the brightest gem in the whole book, and contains instruction so large, and doctrine so precious, that the tongue of angels could not do justice to the full development.—*Victorinus Strigelius*, 1524—1569.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is often and fitly called THE SINNER'S GUIDE. In some of its versions it often helps the returning sinner. Athanasius recommends to some Christians, to whom he was writing, to repeat it when they awake at night. All evangelical churches are familiar with it. Luther says, "There is no other Psalm which is oftener sung or prayed in the church." This is the first Psalm in which we have the word *Spirit* used in application to the Holy Ghost.—*William S. Plumer.*

Whole Psalm.—I cannot doubt the prophetic bearing of this Psalm upon the nation of Israel. In the latter day they shall consider their ways: repentance and self-loathing will be the result. Blood-guiltiness heavier than that of David has to be removed from that nation. They will become the teachers of the Gentiles, when first the iniquity of their own transgressions has been purged away.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Whole Psalm.—This is the most deeply affecting of all the Psalms, and I am sure the one most applicable to me. It seems to have been the effusion of a soul smarting under the sense of a recent and great transgression. My God, whether recent or not, give me to feel the enormity of my manifold offences, and remember not against me the sins of my youth. What a mine of rich matter and expression for prayer! Wash, cleanse me, O Lord, and let my sin and my sinfulness be ever before me. Let me feel it chiefly as sin against thee, that my sin may be of the godly sort. Give me to feel the virulence of my native corruption, purge me from it thoroughly, and put truth into my inward parts, that mine may be a real turning from sin unto the Saviour. Create me anew, O God. Withdraw not thy Spirit. Cause me to rejoice in a present salvation. Deliver me, O God, from the blood-guiltiness of having offended any of thy little ones; and so open my lips that I may speak of the wondrous things thou hast done for my soul! May I offer up spiritual sacrifices; and oh! let not any delinquencies of mine bring a scandal upon thy church; but do thou so purify and build her up, that even her external services, freed from all taint of corruption or hypocrisy, may be well-pleasing in thy sight.—*Thomas Chalmers.*

Verse 1.—"*Have mercy upon me, O God.*" I tremble and blush to mention my name, for my former familiarities with thee only make me more confounded at being recognized by thee after my guilt. I therefore say not, "Lord, remember David," as on a happier occasion; nor as propitiating thee, I used to say, to thy "servant," or, "to the son of thy handmaid." I suggest nothing that should recall my former relation to thee, and so enhance my wickedness. Ask not, then, Lord, who I am, but only forgive me who confess my sin, condemn my fault, and beseech thy pity. "*Have mercy upon me, O God.*" I dare not say *my* God, for that were presumption. I have lost thee by sin, I have alienated myself from thee by following the enemy, and therefore am unclean. I dare not approach thee, but standing afar off and lifting up my voice with great

devotion and contrition of heart, I cry and say, "*Have mercy upon me, O God.*"—*From* "*A Commentary on the Seven Penitential Psalms, chiefly from ancient sources.*" *By the Right Rev. A. P. Forbes, Bishop of Brechin*, 1857.

Verse 1.—"*Have mercy.*" The Hebrew word here translated *have mercy*, signifieth without cause or desert; Psalm xxxv. 19; lxix. 4; Ezekiel xiv. 23; and freely, without paying any price, Exodus xxi. 11. And it is made use of in Lev. vi. 8, where Noah is said to have found *grace* in the eyes of the Lord, that is, special favour, such as the Lord beareth to his chosen in Christ Jesus.—*Charles D. Coetlogon, A.M., in* "*The Portraiture of the Christian Penitent*," 1775.

Verse 1.—"*Mercy*," "*lovingkindness*," "*tender mercies.*" I cannot but observe here, the gradation in the sense of the three words made use of, to express the divine compassion, and the propriety of the order in which they are placed, which would be regarded as a real excellence and beauty in any classical writer. The first, חָנֵּנִי, denotes that kind of affection which is expressed by moaning over any object that we love and pity—that στοργή, natural affection and tenderness, which even brute creatures discover to their young ones, by the several noises which they respectively make over them; and particularly the shrill noise of the camel, by which it testifies its love to its foal. The second, כְּחַסְדֶּךָ, denotes a strong proneness, a ready, large, and liberal disposition to goodness and compassion powerfully prompting to all instances of kindness and bounty; flowing as freely and plentifully as milk into the breasts, or as waters from a perpetual fountain. This denotes a higher degree of goodness than the former. The third, רַחֲמֶיךָ, denotes what the Greeks express by σπλαγχνίζεσθαι; that most tender pity which we signify by the moving of the heart and bowels, which argues the highest degree of compassion of which human nature is susceptible. And how reviving is the belief and consideration of these abundant and tender compassions of God to one in David's circumstances, whose mind laboured under the burthen of the most heinous complicated guilt, and the fear of the divine displeasure and vengeance!—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1.—"*According to the multitude.*" Men are greatly terrified at the multitude of their sins, but here is a comfort—our God hath multitude of mercies. If our sins be in number as the hairs of our head, God's mercies are as the stars of heaven; and as he is an infinite God, so his mercies are infinite; yea, so far are his mercies above our sins, as he himself is above us poor sinners. By this that the Psalmist seeketh for multitude of mercies, he would show how deeply he was wounded with his manifold sins, that one seemed a hundred. Thus it is with us, so long as we are under Satan's guiding, a thousand seem but one; but if we betake ourselves to God's service, one will seem a thousand.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 1.—"*Tender mercies*," or, according to Zanchy in his treatise upon the attributes of God, such a kind of affection as parents feel when they see their children in any extremity. 1 Kings iii. 26.—*Charles D. Coetlogon.*

Verse 1.—"*Blot out my transgressions.*" מָחֵה, *mecheh, wipe out.* There is reference here to an *indictment*: the Psalmist knows what it contains; he pleads guilty, but begs that the writing may be *defaced;* that a proper fluid may be applied to the parchment, *to discharge the ink*, that no record of it may ever appear against him: and this only the *mercy, lovingkindness, and tender compassions*, of the Lord can do.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—"*Blot out my transgressions.*" What the psalmist alludes to is not, as Mr. LeClerc imagines, *debts entered into a book*, and so blotted out of it when forgiven; but the wiping or cleansing of a dish, so as nothing afterwards remains in it. The meaning of the petition is, that God would entirely and absolutely forgive him. so as that no part of the guilt he had contracted might remain, and the punishment of it might be wholly removed.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1.—"*Blot out*," or, as it is used in Exod. xvii. 14, *utterly extirpate*,

so as that there shall not be any remembrance of them forever. Isaiah xliii. 25; xliv. 22.—*Charles de Coetlogon.*

Verse 1.—"My *transgressions.*" Conscience, when it is healthy, ever speaks thus: "My *transgressions.*" It is not the guilt of them that tempted you: they have theirs; but each as a separate agent, has his own degree of guilt. Yours is your own: the violation of your own and not another's sense of duty; solitary, awful, unshared, adhering to you alone of all the spirits of the universe.—*Frederick William Robertson.*

Verses 1, 5.—"*Transgressions*" . . . . "*iniquity*" . . . . "*sin.*" 1. It is *transgressions*, פֶּשַׁע, *pesha*, rebellion. 2. It is *iniquity*, עָוֹן, *avon*, crooked dealing. 3. It is *sin*, חַטָּאת, *chattath*, error and wandering.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—"*Wash me.*" David prays that the Lord would *wash* him; therefore sin defiles, and he was made foul and filthy by his sin; and to wash him much, and to rinse and bathe him, to show that sin had exceedingly defiled him and stained him both in soul and body, and made him loathsome, and therefore he desireth to be washed, and cleansed, and purged from the pollution of sin. Hence we may learn what a vile, filthy and miserable thing sin is in the sight of God: it staineth a man's body, it staineth a man's soul, it maketh him more vile than the vilest creature that lives: no toad is so vile and loathsome in the sight of man, as a sinner, stained and defiled with sin, is in the sight of God, till he be cleansed and washed from it in the blood of Christ.—*Samuel Smith.*

Verse 2.—"*Wash me,*" etc. כְּבֵם is peculiarly applied to the washing and cleansing of garments, as fullers wash and cleanse their cloths. 2 Kings xviii. 7; Exod. xix. 10; Levit. xvii. 15.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 2.—"*Wash me throughly from mine iniquity.*" No other washing will do but *lava tu*, wash thou; so foul, as it will need his washing *throughly.*—*Samuel Page, in "David's Broken Heart,"* 1646.

Verse 2.—"*Wash me throughly.*" Heb. *multiply to wash me;* by which phrase he implies the greatness of his guilt, and the insufficiency of all legal washings, and the absolute necessity of some other and better thing to wash him, even of God's grace, and the blood of Christ.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 2.—"*Wash me . . . . . cleanse me.*" But why should David speak so superfluously? use two words when one would serve? For if we be cleansed, what matter is it whether it be by washing or no? Yet David had great reason for using both words; for he requires not that God would cleanse him by miracle, but by the ordinary way of cleansing, and this was washing; he names therefore washing as the means, and cleansing as the end: he names washing as the work a-doing, and cleansing as the work done; he names washing as considering the agent, and cleansing as applying it to the patient; and indeed, as in the figure of the law there was not, so in the verity of the gospel there is not any ordinary means of cleansing, but only by washing; and therefore out of Christ our Saviour's side there flowed water and blood.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 2.—"*Cleanse me from my sin.*" Observe, it is from the guilt, and not from the punishment, that he thus asked deliverance. That the sword should never depart from his house; that the sin, begun, not only secretly even in its full accomplishment, but far more secretly in the recesses of David's heart, should be punished before all Israel and before the sun; that the child so dear to David should be made one great punishment of his offence; these things, so far as this Psalm is concerned, might, or might not be. It is of the offence against God; of the defiling, although it were not then so expressly declared, God's temple by impurity, that David speaks.—*Ambrose, in J. M. Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 2.—"*Sin.*" The original word signifies to miss an aim, as an archer does who shoots short of his mark, beyond, or beside it. It is also used for treading aside, or tripping, in the act of walking. In a spiritual sense it denotes

deviation from a rule, whether by omission or commission.—*Thomas T. Biddulph, A.M., in Lectures on the Fifty-first Psalm*, 1835.

Verse 2.— Sin is filthy to think of, filthy to speak of, filthy to hear of, filthy to do; in a word, there is nothing in it but vileness.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 3.—"*For I acknowledge my transgressions,*" etc. To *acknowledge our transgressions*, there's confession; and *to have our sin ever before us*, there's conviction and contrition. To acknowledge our transgressions, I say, is to confess our sins; to call them to mind, to bring them back to our remembrance what we can; to own them with shame, and to declare them with sorrow; to reckon them up one by one, to give in a particular account of them, as far as our memory will serve, and to spread them before the Lord, as Hezekiah did Rabshakeh's letter, and in an humble sense of our own vileness to implore his goodness, that he would multiply his mercies over us, as we have multiplied our transgressions against him, in the free and full forgiveness of them all. *To have our sin ever before us*, is throughly to be convinced of it, to be continually troubled in mind about it, to be truly humbled under the sense of it, and to be possest of those dreads and terrors of conscience which may never let us rest or enjoy any quiet within our own breast till we have reconciled ourselves to a gracious God for it.—*Adam Littleton.*

Verse 3.—"*I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*" There cannot be *agnitio* if there be not *cognitio peccati*, an acknowledging, unless there precede a knowledge of sin. David puts them together. If our sins be not before us, how can we set them before God? And therefore, to the right exercise of this duty, there is required a previous examination of our hearts, inspection into our lives, that we may be enabled to see our sins. He that hath not yet asked himself that question, *Quid feci?* What have I done? can never make the confession, *sic feci*, thus and thus have I done; and in this respect I would, though not require, yet advise it as a pious and prudent practice, and that which I doubt not but many Christians have found benefit by, to keep a constant daily catalogue, as of mercies received, so of sins committed.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 3.—"*I*," "*my*," "*my*." David did not think it sufficient to acknowledge that the whole human race were sinners; but as if he stood alone in the world, and was the only offender in it, he says, "I acknowledge *my* transgressions; and *my* sin is ever before me."—*Charles de Coetlogon.*

Verse 3.—"My *sin.*" David owneth his sin, and confesseth it his own. Here is our natural wealth: what can we call our own but sin? Our food and raiment, the necessaries of life, are borrowings. We came hungry and naked into the world, we brought none of these with us, and we deserved none of them here. Our sin came with us, as David after confesseth. We have right of inheritance in sin, taking it by traduction and transmission from our parents: we have right of possession. So Job: "Thou makest me to possess the sins of my youth."—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 3.—"*My* SIN." It is sin, as sin, not its punishment here, nor hereafter, not simply any of its evil consequences; but sin, the sin against God, the daring impiety of my breaking the good and holy law of this living, loving God.—*Thomas Alexander, D.D., in* "*The Penitent's Prayer,*" 1861.

Verse 3.—"*Ever before me.*" Sorrow for sin exceeds sorrow for suffering, in the continuance and durableness thereof: the other, like a landflood, quickly come, quickly gone; this is a continual dropping or running river, keeping a constant stream. "*My sins,*" saith David, "*are ever before me;*" so also is the sorrow for sin in the soul of a child of God, morning, evening, day, night, when sick, when sound, feasting, fasting, at home, abroad, ever within him. This grief begins at his conversion, continues all his life, ends only at his death.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 3.—"*Before me.*" *Coram populo*, before the people; shame to him: *coram ecclesia*, before the church; grief to them: *coram inimicis*, before the

enemies; joy to them: *coram Deo*, before God; anger against him: *coram Nathane*, before Nathan; a chiding. But if any hope of repentance and amendment, it is in *peccatum meum coram me, my sin before me.* Here is the distress of a sinner, he never discerneth how unhappy he is, till his sin is before him.—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 4.—"*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.*" This verse is differently expounded by different persons, and it has ever been considered, that this one little point is the greatest difficulty that is met with in the whole Psalm. Although, therefore, I leave it to others to go according to their own interpretations, yet I have a good hope that I shall be enabled to give the true and genuine meaning of the text. This, then, I would first of all advise the reader to do—to bear in mind that which I observed at the beginning of the Psalm, that David is here speaking in the person of all the saints, and not in his own person only, not in his own person as an adulterer. Although I do not say it might not be, that it was this fall which, as a medium, brought him under the knowledge of himself and of his whole human nature, and made him think thus: "Behold! I, so holy a king, who have with so much pious devotedness observed the law and the worship of God, have been so tempted and overcome by the inbred evil and sin of my flesh, that I have murdered an innocent man, and have for adulterous purposes taken away his wife! And is not this an evident proof that my nature is more deeply infected and corrupted by sin than ever I thought it was? I who was yesterday chaste am to-day an adulterer! I who yesterday had hands innocent of blood, am to-day a man of blood-guiltiness!" And it might be that in this way he derived the feeling sense of his entire sinfulness, from his fall into adultery and murder, and from thence drew his conclusion—that neither the tree nor the fruits of human nature were good, but that the whole was so deformed and lost by sin, that there was nothing sound left in the whole of nature. This I would have the reader bear in mind, first of all, if he desire to have the pure meaning of this passage. In the next place, the grammatical construction is to be explained, which seems to be somewhat obscure. For what the translator has rendered by the *preterperfect*, ought to be the *present*: "*Against thee only do I sin;*" that is, I know that before thee I am nothing but a sinner; or, before thee I do nothing but evil continual; that is, my whole life is evil and depraved on account of sin. I cannot boast before thee of merit or of righteousness, but am evil altogether, and in thy sight this is my character—I do evil. I have sinned, I do sin, and shall sin to the end of the chapter.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 4.—"*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.*" Is there not matter here to make us at a stand? For, to say, "Against thee have I sinned," is most just and fit; but to say, "*Against* THEE ONLY *I have sinned*," seems something hard. It had perhaps been a fit speech in the mouth of our first parent Adam; he might justly have said to God, "*Against thee only have I sinned*," who never sinned against any other; but for us to say it, who commit sins daily against our neighbours, and especially for David to say it, who had committed two notorious sins against his neighbour and faithful friend Uriah, what unfitter speech could possibly be devised? But is it not that these actions of David were great wrongs indeed, and enormous iniquities against Uriah; but can we properly say they were *sins* against Uriah? For what is sin, but a transgression of God's law? And how then can sin be committed against any but against him only whose law we transgress? Or is it, that it may justly be said, "*Against thee only have I sinned*," because against others perhaps in a base *tenure*, yet only against God in *capite?* Or is it, that David might justly say to God, "*Against thee only* have I sinned;" because from others he might appeal, as being a king and having no superior; but no appealing from God, as being King of kings and supreme Lord over all? Or is it that we may justly say, "*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned*," seeing that Christ hath taken and still takes all our sins upon him; and every sin we commit is as a new burthen laid upon his

back and upon his back only? Or is it, lastly, that I may justly say, "*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,*" because in thy sight only I have done it? For from others I could hide it, and did conceal it? But what can be hidden from thy All-seeing eye? And yet if this had been the worst, that I had sinned only against thee, though this had been bad enough, and infinitely too much, yet it might perhaps have admitted reconcilement; but to do this evil, "*in thy sight,*" as if I should say, I would do it though thou stand thyself and look on, and as if in defiance; what sin so formidable? what sin can be thought of so unpardonable? A sin of infirmity may admit apology; a sin of ignorance may find out excuse; but a sin of defiance can find no defence.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4.—"*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.*" There is a godly sorrow which leads a man to life; and this sorrow is wrought in a man by the Spirit of God, and in the heart of the godly; that he mourns for sin because it has displeased God, who is so dear and so sweet a Father to him. And suppose he had neither a heaven to lose, nor a hell to gain, yet he is sad and sorrowful in heart because he has grieved God.—*John Welch,* 1576—1622.

Verse 4.—"*Have* I *sinned.*" *Me, me, adsum, qui feci:* Here, here am I that did it. I whom thou tookest from following the ewes great with lambs, whose sheep-hook thou hast changed for a sceptre, whose sheep for thine own people Israel, upon whose head thou hast set a crown of pure gold. I whom thou didst lately invest in the full monarchy of thy people; to whom thou gavest the possession of Jerusalem from the Jebusites; I who settled peace, religion, and courts of justice in Jerusalem, that thou mightest be served and honoured, and I would fain have built thee an house there; *Ego,* I, to whom God committed the trust of government to rule others, the trust of judgment to punish others, as king over his inheritance. I, to whom God committed the care of others' souls to guide them by his word, to direct them by good counsel, to allure them by his gracious promises, to terrify them by his threatenings, as the Lord's holy prophet. I, who both ways as king and prophet should have been an example of holiness and righteousness to all Israel. Nathan said, *Tu es homo,* thou art the man, in just accusation, and now David saith, *Ego sum homo,* I am the man, in humble confession.—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 4.—"*I have done this evil.*" We may find this in experience, that there be many who will not stick at a general speech that they be sinners, and yet will scarcely be known of one special evil to account for. If you fall with them into the several commandments, they will be ready to discover a conceit that there is scarce one that they are faulty in. In the first commandment they acknowledge no God but one; in the second, they do not worship images; in the third, they swear as little as any, and never but for the truth; in the fourth, they keep their church on Sundays as well as most; in the second table, there is neither treason, nor murder, nor theft, nor whoredom, nor the like gross sin, but concerning it they are ready to protest their innocency. He that shall hear them in particular, I do not see how he shall believe them in the general, when they say they be sinners; for when you arraign them at the several commandments they are ready to plead *not guilty* to them all. So long as men are thus without sense and apprehension of particulars, there is no hope of bringing them ever unto good. Happy is he that is pricked to the heart with the feeling of "*this evil.*" The truth of repentance for that one, will bring him to a thorough repentance for his whole estate. *This one evil* thoroughly understood, brought David on his knees, brake his heart, melted his soul, made him cry for pardon, beg for purging, and importune the Lord for a free spirit to establish him.—*Samuel Hieron, in "David's Penitentiall Psalme opened,"* 1617.

Verse 4.—"*In thy sight.*" David was so bent upon his sin, as that the majesty and presence of God did not awe him at all: this is a great aggravation of sin, and which makes it to be so much the more heinous. For a thief to steal in the very sight of the judge, is the highest piece of impudence that may be; and thus it is for any man to offend in the sight of God and not to be moved with it.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 4.—"*That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*" But hath not David a defence for it here, and that a very just one? For, in saying, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, *that thou mightest be justified in thy saying*," doth he not speak as though he had sinned to do God a pleasure? therefore sinned that God might be justified? And what can be more said for justifying of God? But far is it from David to have any such meaning; his words import not a lessening but an aggravating of his sin, as spoken rather thus: Because a judge may justly be taxed of injustice if he lay a greater punishment upon an offender than the offence deserves; therefore to clear thee, O God, from all possibility of erring in this kind, I acknowledge my sins to be so heinous, my offences so grievous, that thou canst never be unmerciful in punishing though thy punishment should be never so unmerciful. For how can a judge pass the bounds of equity where the delinquent hath passed all bounds of iniquity? and what error can there be in thy being severe when the greatness of my fault is a justification of severity? That thou canst not lay so heavy a doom upon me, which I have not deserved? Thou canst not pronounce so hard a sentence against me, which I am not worthy of. If thou judge me to torture, it is but mildness; if to die the death, it is but my due; if to die everlastingly, I cannot say it were unjust.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 5.—"*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity*," etc. He said not, "Behold, this evil have I done," but, "*Behold, I was conceived in sin*," etc. He says not, "Behold, *I*, David," a king, that have received such-and-such mercies from God, who would have given me more (as God told him), who had that entire communion with him, and graces from him, I, even I, have done this evil. No; he keeps it in till he came to this, and then his heart could hold no longer: "*Oh, behold I was conceived in sin.*" His debasement was at his *auge* here. And to whom is it he utters this *behold?* What, to men? No; his meaning is not to call on men, *q.d.*, O ye sons of men, behold! That is but his secondary aim, arising out of his having penned it, and delivered it unto the church; but when he uttered it, it was to God, or rather afore God, and yet not as calling on God to behold, for that needed not. David had elsewhere said, "God looked down," etc., "and beheld the sons of men," when speaking of this very corruption. He therefore knew God beheld it sufficiently; but he utters it afore God, or, as spoken of himself between God and himself, thereby to express his own astonishment and amazement at the sight and conviction of this corruption, and at the sight of what a monster he saw himself to be in the sight of God in respect of this sin. It was a *behold* of astonishment at himself, as before the great and holy God; and therefore it was he seconds and follows it with another *behold* made unto God: "*Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.*" And it is as if he had said in both, Oh, how am I in every way overwhelmed, whilst with one eye cast on myself I see how infinitely corrupt I am in the very constitution of my nature; and with the other eye I behold and consider what an infinite holy God thou art in thy nature and being, and what an holiness it is which thou requirest. I am utterly overwhelmed in the intuition of both these, and able to behold no more, nor look up unto thee, O holy God!—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 5.—"*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity*," etc. We are not to suppose that David here reflects upon his parents as the medium of transmitting to him the elements of moral evil; and that by the introduction of the doctrine of original sin he intended to extenuate the enormity of his own crimes. On the contrary, we are to regard him as afflicting himself by the humbling consideration that his very nature was fallen, that his transgressions flowed from a heart naturally at enmity with God; that he was not a sinner by accident, but by a depravity of purpose extending to the inmost desires and purposes of the soul; that there was "a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death" (Rom. vii. 23);

and that he was one of a race of guilty beings, none of whom could plead an exemption from an evil heart of unbelief, ready at all times to depart from the living God. Till we see sin in the fountain of the heart, we shall never truly mourn over it in the life and conversation.—*John Morison.*

Verse 5.—"*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.*" He is not low enough down yet, he must come lower. It is not enough for him to confess that the water is filthy at the pool; he goes back to the source, and confesses that the whole river is polluted up to its head. The source is unclean; the very spring wells forth foul waters.—*Thomas Alexander.*

Verse 5.—"*I was shapen in iniquity.*" I shall not easily be persuaded to think that parents, who are sinners themselves and too much under the influence of bad affections and passions, will be very likely to produce children without transmitting to them some of those disorders and corruptions of nature with which they themselves are infected. And if this be a difficulty, I would beg leave to observe that it is a difficulty which affects natural as well as revealed religion. Since we must take human nature as it is, and if it be really in a state of disorder and corruption, and cannot be otherwise, considering the common law of its production, the difficulty must have been as ancient as the first man that was born; and therefore can be no objection against the truth of revelation, but it must be equally so against natural religion, which must equally allow the thing, if it be in reality a fact, with revelation itself.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 5.—Infants are no innocents, being born with original sin; the first sheet wherein they are wrapped is woven of sin, shame, blood, and filth. Ezek. xvi. 4, etc. They are said to sin as they were in the loins of Adam, just as Levi is said to pay tithes to Melchisedek, even in the loins of his forefather Abraham (Heb. vii. 9, 10); otherwise infants would not die, for death is the wages of sin (Rom. vi. 23); and the reign of death is procured by the reign of sin, which hath reigned over all mankind except Christ. All are sinners, infected with the guilt and filth of sin; the rot (according to the vulgar saying) overrunneth the whole flock. Hence David reflects upon original sin as the cause of all his actual, saying, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" Thus man's malady begins betimes, even in our conception; this subtle serpent sowed his tares very early, so that we are all "born in sin." John ix. 34—*Christopher Ness's* "*Divine Legacy,*" 1700.

Verse 5.—Notwithstanding all that Grotius and others have said to the contrary, I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called *original sin;* the propensity to evil which every man brings into the world with him, and which is the fruitful source whence all transgression proceeds.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*Behold.*" Before he entereth on any of the parts of the verse he useth the particle of admiration, "*Behold;*" which he never useth but in some remarkable manner, thereby the more to raise us up to the contemplation of such great matters to be told.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 6.—"*Thou desireth truth in the inward parts.*" Thou lovest *truth*, not shadows or images, but realities; thou lovest truth *in the inward parts*, inside truth, a true heart, a pure conscience: he is a Christian who is one inwardly. Rom. ii. 29.—*John Ball.*

Verse 6.—"*Truth in the inward parts.*" A great French pear is called *le bon hretien*, the good Christian, because they say it is never rotten at the core.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 6.—"*In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" Piscator, in his annotations on this Psalm, puts this sense upon it, that David should bless God for having made him to know this special wisdom in this hidden thing or matter, and had brought the knowledge thereof home, as a point of saving wisdom, to the hidden man of his heart, so as to see fully and clearly this native corruption as the cause of all sin, and on that account to cause him to lay it to heart.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 6.—"*In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" It is one thing to be wise headed and wise tongued, and another to be wise hearted, and therefore in Scripture nothing more ordinary than to set forth wisdom that is true indeed by the heart. God himself is said *to be wise of heart*. Foolish creatures are like Ephraim, "a silly dove without heart." They may have *head* enough, notion enough, *flashing light*, appearing to others enough, but they are without a heart; they have not the great work there, a *new head* and an *old heart*, a *full head* and an *empty heart*, a *light and burning profession*, and a dark, dead, and cold heart; he that takes up in such a condition is a fool and an errant fool.—*John Murcot*, 1657.

Verse 6.—"*And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" Some read it, "In the hidden part thou *hadst* made me to know wisdom;" *that* thou hadst done, but I have fallen from my high state, marred thy handiwork. "By one plunge into lust I have fallen and fouled myself."—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 6.—The copulative particle which connects the two clauses, implies the correspondence between the revelation of the divine will on the one part and the desire and prayer of the penitent heart on the other. "*Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" "What I want thou hast promised to give." Repentance and faith are the gifts of God, and the awakened mind is conscious that they are so.—*Thomas T. Biddulph.*

Verses 6—8.—The right conviction of sin comprehends its being acknowledged not only in our *works*, but also in our entire *being.*—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 7.—"*Purge me with hyssop.*" Do I well to prescribe to God with what he shall purge me, as though I knew all God's medicines as well as himself? and which is worse, I to prescribe and he to administer? But excuse me, O my soul, it is not I that prescribe it to God, it is God that prescribes it to me; for hyssop is his own receipt, and one of the ingredients prescribed by himself to make the water of separation for curing the leprosy. . . . . I must confess I was glad at heart when I first heard hyssop spoken of; to think I should be purged so gently, and with a thing that may so easily be had, for hyssop grows in every garden; and then I thought I might go fetch it thence and purge myself, but now I perceive this is not the hyssop of which Solomon writ when he writ from the cedar to the hyssop; but this hyssop is rather the herb grace, which never grew in garden but in that of Paradise, and which none can fetch thence unless God himself deliver it. The truth is, this hyssop was sometimes a cedar; the highest of all trees became the lowest of all shrubs, only to be made this hyssop for us: for Christ indeed is the true hyssop, and his blood the juice of hyssop that only can purge away my sins.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 7.—"*Purge me with hyssop.*" תְּחַטְּאֵנִי. Properly, *expiat my sin* with hyssop. The Psalmist alludes to the purification from the leprosy (Levit. xiv. 52), or from the touch of a dead body (Num. xix. 19), both of which were to be done by the sprinkling of water and other things with hyssop.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 7.—"*Hyssop.*" The *lasaf* or *asaf*, the caper plant, the bright green creeper which climbs out of the fissures of the rocks in the Sinaitic valleys, has been identified on grounds of great probability with the "hyssop" or *ezob* of Scripture; and thus explains whence came the green branches used, even in the desert, for sprinkling the water over the tents of the Israelites.—*Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, in* "*Sinai and Palestine.*" 1864.

Verse 7.—"*Hyssop.*" Between twenty and thirty different plants have been proposed, but no one of them comes so near the above requirements as the caper plant (*Capparis spinosa*). It grows "out of the wall;" its stalks supply both bunch and rod admirably fitted for the ends indicated; and it has ever been esteemed in the East as possessing cleansing properties.—*John Duns, D.D., in* "*Biblical Natural Science.*"

Verse 7.—"*Hyssop.*" What a pity that Solomon's botany is lost, in which he spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall! The cedar we know, but what is the "*hyssop*" of the royal botanist? Mr. B——, French consul of this city [Sidon], and an enthusiastic botanist, exhibited to me two varieties of hyssop; one, called *zátar* by the Arabs, having the fragrance of thyme, with a hot pungent taste, and long, slender stems. A bunch of these would answer very well for sprinkling the paschal and sacrificial blood on the lintel and posts of the doors, and over the persons and houses cleansed from the leprosy. Mr. B——, however, thinks that a very small green plant, like a moss which covers old walls in damp places, is the "*hyssop*" of Solomon. This I doubt. The other kind also springs out of walls, those of the gardens especially, and was much more likely to attract the attention of the royal student.—*W. M. Thomson, D.D., in "The Land and the Book."*

Verse 7.—The paraphrase of this verse in the *Chaldee* is: "Thou wilt sprinkle me like the priest, which sprinkleth the unclean with the purifying waters, with hyssop, with the ashes of an heifer, and I shall be clean."—*John Morison.*

Verse 7.—"*I shall be whiter than snow.*" But how is this possible? All the dyers upon earth cannot dye a red into a white; and how, then, is it possible that my sins which are as red as scarlet should ever be made as white as snow? Indeed such retrogradation is no work of human art; it must be only his doing who brought the sun ten degrees back in the dial of Ahaz: for God hath a nitre of grace that can bring not only the redness of scarlet sins, but even the blackness of deadly sins, into its native purity and whiteness again. But say it be possible, yet what need is there of so great a whiteness, as to be "*whiter than* snow"? seeing snow is not as *paries dealbatus*, a painted wall, white without and foul within; but it is white, *intus et in cute*, within and without, throughout and all over; and what eye so curious but such a whiteness may content? Yet such a whiteness will not serve, for I may be as white as snow and yet a leper still; as it is said of Gehazi that "he went from Elisha a leper as white as snow:" it must be therefore *whiter than snow.* And such a whiteness it is that God's washing works upon us, makes within us; for no snow is so white in the eyes of men as a soul cleansed from sin is in the sight of God. And yet, a whiter whiteness than this too; for being purged from sin we shall, *induere stolam album*, put on the white robe; and this is a whiteness as much whiter than snow as angelical whiteness is more than elemental.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 7.—In the Hebrew language there are two words to express the different kinds of washing, and they are always used with the strictest propriety; the one, to signify that kind of washing which *pervades the substance* of the thing washed, and cleanses it thoroughly; and the other to express that kind of washing which only *cleanses the surface* of a substance which the water cannot penetrate. The former is applied to the washing of clothes; the latter is used for washing some part of the body. By a beautiful and strong metaphor, David uses the former word in this and the second verse: "*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin;*" "*Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*" So in Jer. iv. 14, the same word is applied to the heart.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 8.—"*Make me to hear joy and gladness.*" This is the exceeding great love of the Lord toward his children, that he hath not only provided a sure salvation for them through the remission of their sins in Christ Jesus, but also seals up in their heart the testimony thereof by his Holy Spirit of adoption, that for their present consolation, lest they should be swallowed up of heaviness through continual temptations. Though he speak not to all his children as he did to Daniel, by an angel, "O man, greatly beloved of God," nor as he did to the blessed Virgin Mary, "Hail, Mary, freely beloved," yet doth he witness the same to the hearts of his children by an inward testimony: when

they hear it they are alive; when they want it they are but dead; their souls refuse all other comforts whatsoever.—*William Cowper.*

Verse 8.—"*Make me to hear joy and gladness.*" As a Christian is the most sorrowful man in the world, so there is none more glad than he. For the cause of his joy is greatest. In respect his misery was greatest, his delivery greatest, therefore his joy greatest. From hell and death is he freed, to life in heaven is he brought. . . . . The person from whom he seeketh this joy is God: "*Make me to hear,*" saith he; whereby he would teach us that this joy cometh only from God; it is he who is the fountain of joy and all pleasure, for "all good things come from above." Natural joys proceed from a natural and fleshly fountain; spiritual joys spring only from God: so he who seeketh those joys beneath seeketh hot water under cold ice.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 8.—"*Make me to hear joy and gladness.*" Another reference to the expiation of the leper, whose ear was to be touched with the blood of the trespass-offering and the oil, as well as thumb and toe, to show that his faculties were now prepared for the service of God; so David prays that his ears may be sanctified to the hearing of joy and gladness; this an unsanctified heart can never receive.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 8.—"*The bones which thou hast broken.*" God, in favour to his children, doth afflict them for sin; and the very phrase of breaking his bones, though it express extremity of misery and pain, yet it hath hope in it, for broken bones by a cunning hand may be set again and return to their former use and strength; so that a conscience distressed for sins is not out of hope; yet upon that hope no wise man will adventure upon sin, saying, though I am wounded, yet I may be healed again; though I am broken, I may be repaired; for let him consider—1. Who breaks his bones—*Thou;* he that made us our bones and put them in their several places, and tied them together with ligaments, and covered them with flesh; he that keepeth all our bones from breaking; it must be a great matter that must move him to break the bones of any of us. The God of all consolation, that comforteth us in all our distresses, when he cometh to distress us, this makes affliction weigh heavy. . . . . 2. The pain of the affliction exprest so feelingly in the breaking of bones, which, as is said, is the anguish of the soul for sin, and fear of the consuming fire of God's wrath, and the tempest, as Job calls it, of anger. 3. The pain of setting these bones again: for, though bones dislocated may be put in joint, and though bones broken may be set again, yet this is not done without pain and great extremity to the patient.

Repentance setteth all our broken, pained bones; it recovereth the soul from the anguish thereof; but he that once feeleth the smart of a true repentance, will say, the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, are as hard a bargain as ever he made, and as dear bought; they cost tears, which are *sanguis vulnerati cordis*, the blood of a wounded heart; they cost sighs and groans which cannot be expressed; they cost watching, fasting, taming of the body to bring it in subjection, even to the crucifying of the flesh with the lusts thereof. Therefore, let no man adventure his bones in hope of setting them again.—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 8.—"*That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*" The displeasure which God expressed against the sins he had been guilty of, and the deep sense he had of the aggravated nature of them, filled him with those pains and agonies of mind, as that he compares them to that exquisite torture he must have felt had all his bones been crushed, for the original word דִּכִּיתָ, signifies more than broken, namely, being entirely mashed; and he compares the joy that God's declaring himself fully reconciled to him would produce in his mind, to that inconceivable pleasure, which would arise from the instantaneous restoring and healing those bones, after they had been thus broken and crushed to pieces.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 9.—"*Hide thy face from my sins.*" The verb כְּתֹר properly signifies *to veil*, or hide with a veil.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 9.—"*Hide thy face from my sins.*" He said in the third verse, that his sin was always in his sight: and now he prays that God would put it out of his sight. This is a very good order. If we hold our sins in our eyes to pursue them, God will cast them behind his back to pardon them: if we remember them and repent, he will forget them and forgive: otherwise, *peccatum unde homo non advertit, advertit Deus: et si advertit, animadvertit*—the sin from which man turns not, God looks to it; and if he look to it, sure he will punish it.—*William Cowper.*

Verse 9.—"*All mine iniquities.*" See how one sin calleth to mind many thousands, which though they lie asleep a long time, like a sleeping debt, yet we know not how soon they may be reckoned for. Make sure of a general pardon, and take heed of adding new sins to the old.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 10.—"*Create in me a clean heart, O God.*" O thou that createdst the first heaven and the first earth of nothing! O thou that createst the *new heaven* and the *new earth* (wherein dwells righteousness), when sin had made the creature worse than nothing! O thou that createst the *new creature*, the new man, fit to be an inhabitant of the new world, of the new Jerusalem! O thou that hast said, "Behold, I make all things new:" *create* thou in me, even in me, "*a clean heart; and renew a right spirit within me.*"—*Matthew Lawrence.*

Verse 10.—"*Create in me a clean heart, O God,*" etc. David prayeth the Lord *to create him a new heart*, not to correct his old heart, but to create him a new heart; showing that his heart was like an old garment, so rotten and tattered that he could make no good of it by patching or piecing, but even must cut it off, and take a new. Therefore Paul saith, "Cast off the old man;" not pick him and wash him till he be clean, but cast him off and begin anew, as David did. Will ye know what this renewing is? It is the repairing of the image of God, until we be like Adam when he dwelt in Paradise. As there is a whole old man, so there must be a whole new man. The old man must change with the new man, wisdom for wisdom, love for love, fear for fear; his worldly wisdom for heavenly wisdom, his carnal love for spiritual love, his servile fear for Christian fear, his idle thoughts for holy thoughts, his vain words for wholesome words, his fleshly works for sanctified works.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 10.—"*Create in me a clean heart.*" *Creating*, to speak properly, is to make of nought, and is here used improperly. The prophet speaketh according to his own feeling and present judgment of himself, as though he had lost all, and had no goodness in himself. No doubt the prophet's heart was in part clean, though not so much as he desired. These things thus opened, here cometh a question first to be answered. *Quest.* Whether David could have lost the cleanness of heart, having once had it? *Ans.* No. The gifts and calling of God, that is (as I take it), the gifts of effectual calling, are such as God never repenteth of or taketh away. Faith, hope, and charity are abiding gifts, as sure as the election of God, which is unchangeable. Indeed, the children of God, if we only considered them in themselves with their enemies, might fall away, but being founded upon the unchangeable nature of God, and immutability of his counsel, they cannot, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them, the elect cannot be deceived or plucked out of Christ's hands. Nay, certain it is that David did not actually leave his former cleanness. For sure it is, his heart smiting him (as here it did), so doing before in less matters, it was not wholly void of cleanness. And again, it could not pray for cleanness if it were not somewhat clean. This is most sure, that by grievous sins much filthiness cometh to the soul, as by a boisterous wind a tree may lose his leaves and some branches, so as that the party sinning may be brought into as great passions almost as if he had lost all, but the desire of grace is an infallible certainty of some grace of that kind. The prophet therefore desireth not a clean heart because he had it not in any sort, but because he could not so well perceive it in himself, and take such comfort in it as he had done before, and for that he desired it a great deal more than now he had it. So learned, so

rich men, think themselves not learned, not rich, in respect of that which they do desire, and when the sun is up, the moon seemeth to have no light.—*George Estey, in "Certaine Godly and Learned Expositions,"* 1603.

Verse 10.—"*Create in me a clean heart, O God,*" etc. This "creation" is from nothing. David uses the same word of our creation which Moses uses of "the creation of the heaven and the earth." Our creation "in Jesus Christ" is no mere strengthening of our powers, no mere aiding of our natural weakness by the might of the grace of God, it is not a mere amendment, improvement of our moral habits; it is a creation out of nothing, of that which we had not before. There was nothing in us whereof to make it. We were decayed, corrupt, dead in trespasses and sins. What is dead becometh not alive, except by the infusion of what it had not. What is corrupt receiveth not soundness, save by passing away itself and being replaced by a new production. "The old man" passeth not into the new man, but is "put off." It is not the basis of the new life, but a hindrance to it. It must be "put off" and the new man "put on," "created in Christ Jesus."—*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*, 1853.

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—He used the word *create* (Heb. *bara*), a word only used of the work of God, and showing that the change in him could be wrought only by God.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 10.—"*A clean heart.*" The priest was required to make a strict examination of the skin of the leper before he could pronounce him clean; David prays God to make his heart clean.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 10.—"*A right spirit.*" *A steadfast spirit, i.e.*, a mind steady in following the path of duty.—*French and Skinner.*

Verses 10—12.—Who was to do this work? Not *himself;* God alone. Therefore, he prays: "O God, create—O Lord, renew; uphold by thy Spirit."—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 11.—"*Cast me not away from thy presence.*" David lamented before that sin had slain him, and made him like a dead man, wanting a heart or quickening spirit; and now he fears lest, as the dead are abhorred by the living, so the Lord should cast him as a dead and abominable thing out of his presence. Whereof we learn this is one of the just punishments of sin; it procures the casting out of a man from the face of God; and it may let us see how dear bought are the pleasures of sin when a man to enjoy the face of the creature deprives himself of the comfortable face of the Creator; as David here, for the carnal love of the face of Bathsheba, puts himself in danger to be cast out forever from the presence of the Lord his God. If a man could remember this in all Satan's temptations, what it is that the deceiver offers, and what it is again that he seeks, he would be loth to buy the perishing pleasures of sin upon such a price as Satan selleth them, but would answer him as the apostle did Simon Magus, "Thy money, with thyself, go into perdition;" thy gain, thy glory, thy pleasure, and whatever thou wouldst give me to offend the Lord my God, go with thyself into perdition, for what canst thou offer unto me comparable to that which thou wouldst steal from me?

But how is it that he prays, "*Cast me not out from thy presence*"? May a man be cast any way from it? Saith he not himself, "What way can I flee from thy presence?" This is soon answered by distinguishing his twofold presence—one in mercy, wherewith he refresheth and comforteth his own, and this without intermission they enjoy who are in heaven; another, in wrath, whereby he terrifies and torments without intermission the damned in hell. As to them who are upon earth, certain it is he is displeased with many, who, because they see not his angry face, regard it not, borne out with temporal recreations of the creature, which will fail them; and there are many, again, to whom he looks as a loving father in Christ, and yet they see not his merciful face by reason of many interjected veils; but to them who once have felt the sweetness of his favourable face it is death to want it.—*William Cowper.*

Verse 11.—"*Cast me not away from thy presence.*" Like the leper who is banished from society till cleansed, or as Saul was rejected from being king, because he obeyed not the word of the Lord. 1 Sam. xv. 23. David could not but feel that his transgressions would have deserved a similar rejection.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 11.—"*Cast me not away.*" Lord, though I, alas! have cast thee from me, yet cast me not away: hide not thy face from me, although I so often have refused to look at thee; leave me not without help, to perish in my sins, though I have aforetime left thee.—*Fra Thomé de Jesu.*

Verse 11.—"*Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*" The words of this verse imply that the Spirit had not altogether been taken away from him, however much his gifts had been temporarily obscured. . . . . Upon one point he had fallen into a deadly lethargy, but he was not "given over to a reprobate mind;" and it is scarcely conceivable that the rebuke of Nathan the prophet should have operated so easily and suddenly in arousing him had there been no latent spark of godliness still remaining. . . . . The truth on which we are now insisting is an important one, as many learned men have been inconsiderately drawn into the opinion that the elect, by falling into mortal sin, may lose the Spirit altogether, and be alienated from God. The contrary is clearly declared by Peter, who tells us that the word by which we are born again is an incorruptible seed (1 Peter i. 23.); and John is equally explicit in informing us that the elect are preserved from falling away altogether. 1 John iii. 9. However much they may appear for a time to have been cast off by God, it is afterwards seen that grace must have been alive in their breasts even during that interval when it seemed to be extinct. Nor is there any force in the objection that David speaks as if he feared that he might be deprived of the Spirit. It is natural that the saints, when they have fallen into sin, and have thus done what they could to expel the grace of God, should feel an anxiety upon this point; but it is their duty to hold fast the truth, that grace is the incorruptible seed of God, which never can perish in any heart where it has been deposited. This is the spirit displayed by David. Reflecting upon his offence, he is agitated with fears, and yet rests in the persuasion that, being a child of God, he would not be deprived of what, indeed, he had justly forfeited.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 12.—"*Restore.*" It is no small comfort to a man that hath lost his receipt for a debt paid when he remembers that the man he deals with is a good and just man, though his discharge is not presently to be found. That God whom thou hast to deal with is very gracious; what thou hast lost he is ready to restore (the evidence of thy grace I mean). David begged this, and obtained it. Yea, saith faith, if it were true what thou fearest, that thy grace was never true, there is mercy enough in God's heart to pardon all thy former hypocrisy if thou comest in the sincerity of thy heart; and so faith persuades the soul by an act of adventure to cast itself upon God in Christ. Wilt not thou, saith faith, expect to find as much mercy at God's hands, as thou canst look for at a man's? It is not beyond the line of created mercy to forgive many unkindnesses, much falseness and unfaithfulness, upon an humble, sincere acknowledgment of the same. The world is not so bad but it abounds with parents who can do thus much for their children, and masters for their servants; and is that hard for God to do which is so easy in his creature? Thus faith vindicates God's name. And so long as we have not lost sight of God's merciful heart, our head will be kept above water, though we want the evidence of our own grace.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 12.—"*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,*" etc. How can God restore that which he took not away? For, can I charge God with the taking away the joy of his salvation from me? O gracious God, I charge not thee with taking it, but myself with losing it; and such is the miserable condition of us poor wretches, that if thou shouldst restore no more to us than what thou

takest from us, we should quickly be at a fault in our estates, and our ruin would be as sudden as inevitable. But why am I so earnest for restoring? for what good will restoring do me? and how shall I more keep it being restored, than I kept it before being enjoyed? and if I so enjoy it, as still to fear to lose it, what joy can there be in such enjoying? O therefore, not restore it only, but "*establish me with thy free spirit;*" that as by thy restoring I may enjoy it entirely, so by thy establishing I may enjoy it securely.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 12.—"*Uphold me.*" I am tempted to think that I am now an established Christian, that I have overcome this or that lust so long that I have got into the habit of the opposite grace, so that there is no fear; I may venture very near the temptation, nearer than other men. This is a lie of Satan. I might as well speak of gunpowder getting by habit a power of resisting fire, so as not to catch the spark. As long as powder is wet it resists the spark, but when it becomes dry it is ready to explode at the first touch. As long as the Spirit dwells in my heart, he deadens me to sin, so that if lawfully called through temptation I may reckon upon God carrying me through. But when the Spirit leaves me, I am like dry gunpowder. Oh, for a sense of this!—*Robert Murray M'Cheyne.*

Verse 12.—"*Uphold me with thy free spirit.*" A loving mother chooses a fitting place, and a fitting time, to let her little child fall; it is learning to walk, it is getting over confident, it may come to a dangerous place, and if possessed of all this confidence, may fall and destroy itself. So she permits it to fall at such a place, and in such a way as that it may be hurt, wholesomely hurt, but not dangerously so. It has now lost its confidence, and clings all the more fondly and trustingly to the strong hand that is able to hold up all its goings. So this David, this little child of the great God, has fallen; it is a sore fall, all his bones are broken, but it has been a precious and a profitable lesson to him; he has no confidence any longer in himself, his trust is not now in an arm of flesh. "Uphold me with thy free spirit."—*Thomas Alexander.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—"*Let a free spirit sustain me;*" that is, let me not be enslaved, as I have been, by my sinful passions.—*Henry Dimock, M.A.*, 1791.

Verse 13.—"*Then will I teach trangressors thy ways,*" etc. We see our duty craves that when we have received mercy from God for ourselves, we should make vantage of it for the edification of others. Every talent received from God should be put to profit, but specially the talent of mercy; as it is greatest, so the Lord requires greater fruit of it, both for his own glory and for the edification of our brethren. Seeing we are vessels of mercy, should not the scent and sweet odour of mercy go from us to others? This duty Christ craved from Peter: "And thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren." And this duty, as David here promiseth, so we may read how he did perform it: "Come unto me, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." The property of a Christian is, *fides per delectionem efficax*, faith worked by love. What availeth it to pretend faith toward God, where there is no love toward thy neighbour? and wherein can thy love be declared more than in this, to draw thy neighbour to the participation of that same merit whereunto God hath called thee? By the law a man was bound to bring home his neighbour's wandering beast if he had met with it before; how much more, then, to turn again his neighbour himself when he wanders from the Lord his God? If two men walking on the way should both fall into one pit, and the one being relieved out of it should go his way and forget his neighbour, might it not justly be called a barbarous and inhuman cruelty? We have all fallen into one and the same mire of iniquity; since the Lord hath put out his merciful hand to draw us out of this prison of sin, shall we refuse to put out our hand to see if possibly we may draw up our brethren with us?—*William Cowper* (*Bishop*).

Verse 14 (*first clause*).—"*Deliver me from bloods.*" The term *bloods* in

Hebrew may denote any capital crime; and in my opinion he is here to be considered as alluding to the sentence of death, to which he felt himself to be obnoxious, and from which he requests deliverance.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 14 (*first clause*).—The Chaldee reads, "*Deliver me from the judgment of murder.*"

Verse 14.—"*O God, thou God of my salvation.*" "*O God,*" is a good invocation, for he heareth prayers. Yet to distinguish him from all false gods he is so particular as to single him from all other: "*Thou God.*" And to magnify him, and to re-enforce his petition, he calleth him *Deum salutis*, "*the God of my salvation,*" which expresseth him able to deliver him; for it is his nature, and his love, and his glory, to be a preserver of men. And to bring home this joy and comfort into his own heart, he addeth, *salutis meæ*, "*of my salvation.*" So it is *oratio fervens*, and the apostle telleth us that such a prayer prevaileth much with God. For God may be a Saviour and a deliverer, and yet we may escape his saving hand, his right hand may skip us. We can have no comfort in the favours of God, except we can apply them at home; rather we may "think on God and be troubled."—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 14.—"*And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*" Hierom, Basil, Euthymius, and other ancient doctors observe that natural corruptions and actual sins are the very rampiers which stop the free passage of song (verse 15). So David doth himself expound himself: "*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*" His unthankfulness did cry, his adultery cry, his murder cry unto the Lord for revenge; but alas! himself was mute, till God in exceeding great mercy did stop the mouths of his clamorous adversaries, and gave him leave to speak.—*John Boys.*

Verse 14.—"*Aloud.*" This for God, for himself, for the church. 1. *For God*, that his honour may be proclaimed, therefore they borrowed the voice of still and loud instruments. . . . . 2. *For himself.* Having received such a benefit, he cannot contain himself, this new wine of spiritual joy which filleth his vessel must have a vent. All passions are loud. Anger chides loud, sorrow cries loud, fear shrieks loud, and joy sings loud. So he expresseth the vehemency of his affection; for to whom much is forgiven, they love much. 3. *For others.* Iron whetteth iron—examples of zeal and devotion affect much, and therefore solemn and public assemblies do generally tender the best service to God, because one provoketh another.—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 15.—"*O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*" As man is a little world in the great, so the tongue is a great world in the little. *Nihil habet medium; aut grande malum est, aut grande bonum* *. It has no mean; it is either a great evil, or a great good. If good (as Eunapius said of that famous rhetorician), *a walking library*, a whole university of edifying knowledge; but if bad (as St. James doth tell us, ch. iii. 6), "*a world of wickedness.*" No better dish for God's public service, when it is well seasoned; again, none worse, when ill handled. So that if we desire to be doorkeepers in God's house, let us entreat God first to be a doorkeeper in our house, that he would shut the wicket of our mouth against unsavoury speeches, and open the door of our lips, "*that our mouth may shew forth his praise.*" This was David's prayer, and ought to be thy practice, wherein observe three points especially: who, *the Lord;* what, *open my lips;* why, *that my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* For the first—man of himself cannot untie the strings of his own stammering tongue, but it is God only which opened "a door of utterance." Col. iv. 3. When we have a good thought, it is (as the school doth speak) *gratia infusa;* when a good word, *gratia effusa;* when a good work, *gratia diffusa.* Man is a lock, the Spirit of God has a key, "which openeth and no man shutteth;" again, "shutteth and no man openeth." Rev. iii. 7. He did open the heart of Lydia to conceive well, the ears of the prophet to hear well, the eyes of Elisha's

* Jerome.

servant to see well, and here the lips of David to speak well. Acts xvi. ; Isai. l. ; 2 Kings vi. And therefore, whereas in the former verse he might seem too peremptory, saying, "*My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness;*" he doth, as it were, correct himself by this latter edition and second speech: O Lord, I find myself most unable to sing or say, but "*open thou my lips,*" and touch thou my tongue, and then I am sure "*my mouth shall show forth thy praise.*"—*John Boys.*

Verse 15.—"*O Lord, open thou my lips,*" etc. Again he seems to have the case of the leper before his mind, with the upper lip covered, and only crying unclean, unclean; and he prays as a spiritual leper to be enabled, with freedom and fulness, to publish abroad the praise of his God.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 15—(*first clause*). He prays that *his lips may be opened;* in other words, that God would afford him matter of praise. The meaning usually attached to the expression is, that God would so direct his tongue by the Spirit as to fit him for singing his praises. But though it is true that God must supply us with words, and that if he do not, we cannot fail to be silent in his praise, David seems rather to intimate that his mouth must be shut until God called him to the exercise of thanksgiving by extending pardon.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 16.—"*For thou desirest not sacrifice;*" etc. There may be another reason why David here affirms that God would not accept of a sacrifice, nor be pleased with a burnt-offering. No particular sacrifices were appointed by the law of Moses to expiate the guilt of murder and adultery. The person who had perpetrated these crimes was, according to the divine law, to be punished with death. David therefore may be understood as declaring, that it was utterly vain for him to think of resorting to sacrifices and burnt-offerings with a view to the expiation of his guilt; that his criminality was of such a character, that the ceremonial law made no provision for his deliverance from the doom which his deeds of horror deserved; and that the only sacrifices which would avail were those mentioned in the succeeding verse, "*The sacrifices of a broken heart.*"—*John Calvin.*

Verse 16.—"*Else would I give it thee.*" And good reason it is, that we who lie daily at the beautiful gate of the temple begging alms of him, and receiving from his open hand, who openeth his hand, and filleth with his plenty every living thing, should not think much to return to him such offerings of our goods as his law requireth.—*Samuel Page.*

Verses 16, 17.—And now I was thinking what were fit *to offer to God* for all his lovingkindness he has showed me; and I thought upon *sacrifices*, for they have sometimes been pleasing to him, and he hath oftentimes smelt a sweet odour from them; but I considered that sacrifices were but shadows of things to come, are not now in that grace they have been; for *old things are past, and new are now come;* the shadows are gone, the substances are come in place. The bullocks that are to be sacrificed now are our hearts; it were easier for me to give him bullocks for sacrifice, than to give him my heart. But why should I offer him that he cares not for? my heart, I know, he cares for; and if it be broken, and offered up by penitence and contrition, it is the only sacrifice that now he delights in. But can we think God to be so indifferent that he will accept of a broken heart? Is a thing that is broken good for anything? Can we drink in a broken glass? Or can we lean upon a broken staff? But though other things may be the worse for breaking, yet a heart is never at the best till it be broken; for till it be broken we cannot see what is in it; till it be broken, it cannot send forth its sweetest odour; and therefore, though God loves a whole heart in affection, yet he loves a broken heart in sacrifice. And no marvel, indeed, seeing it is he himself that breaks it; for as nothing but goat's blood can break the adamant, so nothing but the blood of our scape-goat, Jesus Christ, is able to break our adamantine hearts. Therefore, accept, O God, my broken heart, which I offer thee with a whole heart; seeing thou canst neither except against it for being whole, which is broken in sacrifice, nor except against it for being broken, which is whole in affection.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 17.—"*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart,*" etc. When speaking of *thankfulness*, we might have expected him to say, "a *joyful* heart, or a thankful heart," but instead of that he says, "a contrite heart." For the joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow and contrition for sin: this will still continue. And the deeper the sense of sin, and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart, is therefore the best thank-offering.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 17.—It may be observed that the second word, נִכְאָה which we render *contrite*, denotes the being bruised and broken to pieces, as a thing is bruised in a mortar (See Numbers xi. 8), and therefore, in a moral sense, signifies such a weight of sorrow as must wholly crush the mind without some powerful and seasonable relief.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 18.—"*In thy good pleasure.*" Whatever we seek must ever be sought under this restriction, "*Thy good pleasure.*" Build thou, but do it in thine own wise time, in thine own good way. Build thou the walls of separation that divide the church from the world; let them be *in* it, not *of* it; keep them from its evil. Build thou the walls that bind, that unite thy people into one city, under one polity, that they all may be one. Build thou, and raze thou; raze all the inner walls that divide thy people from thy people; hasten that day when, as there is but one Shepherd, so shall there be but one sheep-fold.—*Thomas Alexander.*

Verses 18, 19.—Some few learned Jewish interpreters, while they assign the Psalm to the occasion mentioned in the title, conjecture that the 18th and 19th verses were added by some Jewish bard, in the time of the Babylonish captivity. This opinion is also held by Venema, Green, Street, French and Skinner. There does not, however, seem to be any sufficient ground for referring the poem, either in whole or part, to that period. Neither the walls of Jerusalem, nor the buildings of Zion, as the royal palace and the magnificent structure of the temple, which we know David had already contemplated for the worship of God (2 Samuel vii. 1, etc.), were completed during his reign. This was only effected under the reign of his son Solomon. 1 Kings iii. 1.

The prayer, then, in the 18th verse might have a particular reference to the completion of these buildings, and especially to the rearing of the temple, in which sacrifices of unprecedented magnitude were to be offered. David's fears might easily suggest to him that his crimes might prevent the building of the temple, which God had promised should be erected. 2 Samuel vii. 13. "The king forgets not," observes Bishop Horne, "to ask mercy for his people as well as for himself; that so neither his own nor their sins might prevent either the building and flourishing of the earthly Jerusalem, or, what was of infinitely greater importance, the promised blessing of Messiah, who was to descend from him, and to rear the walls of the New Jerusalem."—*James Anderson's Note to Calvin, in loc.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

[*The Psalm is upon its surface so full of suggestions for sermons that I have not attempted to offer any of my own, but have merely inserted a selection from Mr. G. Rogers and others.*]

Verse 1.—I. The Prayer. 1. For mercy, not justice. Mercy is the sinner's attribute—as much a part of the divine nature as justice. The possibility of sin is implied in its existence. The actual commission of sin is implied in its display. 2. For pardon, not pity merely, but forgiveness. II. The plea. 1. For

the pardon of great sins on account of great mercies, and lovingkindness. 2. Many sins on account of multitude of mercies. 3. Hell-deserving sins on account of tender mercies. We who have sinned are human, he who pardons is divine.

"Great God, thy *nature* hath no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found."

Verse 3.—I. Confession. "I acknowledge," etc. II. Humiliation, not a mere confession with the lips, but ever before me—in its guilt—defilement—consequences in this life and hereafter.

Verses 3, 4, 11, 12, 17.—I. Scripture estimate of sin. I. Personal accountability—"*My sin.*" 2. Estimated as hateful to God—"*Against thee,*" etc. 3. Sin estimated as separation from God. II. Spiritual restoration. First step—Sacrifice of a broken spirit. Last step—Spirit of liberty. "*Thy free spirit.*"—*F. W. Robertson.*

Verse 4.—1. The person—"*I.*" 2. The commission—"*done.*" 3. The trespass—"*evil.*" 4. The particularity—"*this.*" 5. The daring of it—"*in thy sight.*"—*Samuel Page.*

Verse 4.—"*Against thee.*" 1. Thee, an *holy* God—a God of pure eyes, and that cannot endure to behold iniquity. 2. Thee, a *just* God—who will *punish* sin. 3. Thee, an *Almighty* God. 4. Thee, a *gracious* God.—*T. Horton.*

Verse 4.—I. Self-condemnation. 1. For the greatness of sin. Not against self merely, or fellow men, but God. This includes all guilt, for all is against him. 2. Its effrontery, "in thy sight." II. Divine justification. 1. In the permission of sin. 2. In its punishment. 3. In its forgiveness. God must be justified when he justifies the ungodly.

Verse 6.—See T. Goodwin's Treatise, entitled, "An Unregenerate Man's Guiltiness before God, in respect of Sin and Punishment." Bk. ix. cap. i. ii. [Nichol's edition, Vol. X., p. 324 *et seq.*]

Verse 7.—Here is, I. Faith in the act of an atonement for sin. "I shall be clean." II. Faith in the method of its application. "Purge me," etc. Sprinkled as the blood of sacrifices. III. Faith in its efficacy. "I shall be whiter," etc.

Verse 10.—I. The change to be effected. 1. A clean heart. 2. A right spirit. II. The power by which it is accomplished. 1. A creative power, such as created the world at first. 2. A renewing power, such as continually renews the face of the earth. III. The acquirement of these blessings. The prayer, "Create," etc.

Verse 11 (*first clause*).—I am not cast away, and would be thankful. I deserve to be cast away, and ought to be penitential. I am afraid of being cast away, and must be prayerful. "Cast me not away." 1. From thy *protecting* presence into *danger*. 2. From thy *loving* presence into *wrath*. 3. From thy *joyous* presence into *distress*. 4. From thy *affluent* presence into *destitution*. 5. From thy *gracious* presence into *despair*. Sin hurries us away from God; grace hastens us into his embrace: the former severs, and the latter unites, God and the soul. —*W. Jackson.*

Verse 11.—I. There is often much comfort in much grief. "Cast me not," etc. A consciousness of still having the divine presence, and a dread of losing it, prompts the prayer. II. There is often much faith in much fear. "Take not," etc. Faith in the spirit works within him while he fears.

Verses 12—13.—A threefold desire: 1. To be *happy*—"Restore," etc. 2. To be *consistent*—"Uphold," etc. 3. To be *useful*—"Then will I teach," etc.—*W. Jackson.*

Verse 13.—I. It is not our duty to seek the conversion of others until we are converted ourselves. II. The greater enjoyment we have in the ways of God, the more faithfully and earnestly we shall make them known to others. III. The more faithfully and earnestly we make them known to others the more they will be influenced by them.

Verse 15.—I. Confession. His lips are sealed on account—1. Of his fall—and

well they might be. 2. Of natural timidity. 3. Of want of zeal. II. Petition, "Open thou," etc. Not my understanding merely and heart, but "lips." III. Resolution. Then he would speak freely in God's praise.

Verse 15.—I. When God does not open our lips we had better keep them closed. II. When he does open them we ought not to close them. III. When he opens them it is not to speak in our own praise, and seldom in praise of others, but always in his own praise. IV. We should use this prayer whenever we are about to speak in his name. "O Lord, open," etc.

Verses 16—17.—I. Men would gladly do something towards their own salvation if they could. "Thou desirest not," etc., else would I give it. II. All that they can do is not of the least avail. All the ceremonial observances of Jewish or Gentile churches could not procure pardon for the least transgression of the moral law. III. The only offering of man which God will not despise is a broken and a contrite heart. IV. All other requirement for his salvation God himself will provide.

Verse 18.—I. For whom is the prayer offered—for the church or Zion? 1. Next to our own welfare we should seek the welfare of Zion. 2. All should seek it by prayer. II. For what is the prayer offered? 1. The kind of good, not worldly or ecclesiastical, but spiritual. 2. The measure of good. "In thy good pleasure." Thine own love to it, and what thou hast already done for it. 3. The continuance of good. "Build," etc. Its doctrines, graces, zeal.

Verse 19.—I. When we are accepted of God our offerings are accepted. "Then," etc. II. We should then make the richest offerings in our power, our time, talents, influence, etc. 1. Holy obedience. 2. Self-sacrifices, not half offerings, but whole "burnt-offerings;" not lambs merely, but "bullocks." 3. Zeal for divine ordinances. "Upon thine altar." III. God will take pleasure in such services. "Then shalt thou be pleased." 1. Because from his own redeemed. 2. Because given in the name of the Redeemer. With such sacrifices God is well pleased.

WORKS UPON THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM.

Exposition of the Fifty-first Psalm, by MARTIN LUTHER, in "Select works of Martin Luther, translated by Rev. HENRY COLE." Vol. I., pp. 51—197.

"*An Exposition vppon the* 51 *Psalme,*" in "*Certaine Godly and learned Expositions upon diuers parts of Scripture.* As they were preached and afterwards more briefly penned by that worthy man of God, Maister GEORGE ESTEY. . . . . Late preacher of the word of God in St. Edmund's Burie." 1603. [4to.]

"*David's Penitentiall Psalme opened: in thirtie severall Lectures thereon.* By SAM. HIERON. 1617." [4to.]

"*Good News from Canaan; or, An Exposition on the* 51 *Psalme,*" in "The Workes of Mr. William Cowper, late Bishop of Galloway." 1629. [Folio.]

"*David's Repentance; or, A plaine and familiar Exposition of the LI. Psalme:* first preached, and now published for the benefit of God's church. Wherein euery faithfull Christian may set before his eyes the Patterne of vnfeigned Repentance, whereby we may take heed of the falling into sin again. The eighth edition, newly revised and profitably amplified by the author, SAMVEL SMITH, preacher of the word of God at Prittlewell in Essex . . . . . 1630." [12mo.]

"*A Godly and Fruitful Exposition of the Fifty-one Psalme, the fifth of the Penitential,*" in ARCHIBALD SYMSON'S "Sacred Septenarie." 1638.

"*Meditations and Disquisitions upon the* 51 *Psalme of David*," in "*Meditations and Disquisitions upon the seven Psalms of David, commonly called the Penitentiall Psalmes.*" By Sir RICHARD BAKER, Knight. 1639.

"*CLII. Lectures upon Psalm LI.* Preached at Ashby-Delazouch, in Leicester-Shire. By the late faithfull, and worthy Minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. ARTHUR HILDERSAM. 1642." [Folio.]

"*An Exposition of the one-and-fiftieth Psalme*," in pp. 51.—239, of "Sermons with some religious and divine Meditations. By the Right Reverend Father in God, ARTHVRE LAKE, late Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells." 1639. [Folio.]

"*David's Broken Heart; or, an Exposition upon the whole Fifty-one Psalme.* By that Reverend divine Doctor SAMUEL PAGE, late Pastour of Deptford Stroud, in Kent. . . . . 1646." [4to.]

"*Exposition of Psalm LI., in "Chandler's Life of David.*" Vol. II. pp. 254—273.

"*The Portraiture of the Christian Penitent: attempted in a course of Sermons upon Psalm LI.* . . . . By the Rev. CHA. DE COETLOGON, A.M. 1775."

"*Lectures on the Fifty-first Psalm, delivered in the Parish Church of St. James', Bristol.* By the Rev. THOMAS T. BIDDULPH, A.M. 1835."

"*The Penitent's Prayer: a Practical Exposition of the Fifty-first Psalm.* By the Rev. THOMAS ALEXANDER, M.A., Chelsea."

PSALM LII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician.—*Even short Psalms, if they record but one instance of the goodness of the Lord, and rebuke but briefly the pride of man, are worthy of our best minstrelsy. When we see that each Psalm is dedicated to "the chief musician," it should make us value our psalmody, and forbid us to praise the Lord carelessly.* Maschil. *An Instructive. Even the malice of a Doeg may furnish instruction to a David.* A Psalm of David. *He was the prime object of Doeg's doggish hatred, and therefore the most fitting person to draw from the incident the lesson concealed within it.* When Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and saith unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech. *By this deceitful tale-bearing, he procured the death of all the priests at Nob: though it had been a crime to have succoured David as a rebel, they were not in their intent and knowledge guilty of the fault. David felt much the villany of this arch-enemy, and here he denounces him in vigorous terms; it may be also that he has Saul in his eye.*

DIVISION.—*We shall follow the sacred pauses marked by the Selahs of the poet.*

EXPOSITION.

WHY boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God *endureth* continually.

2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

3 Thou lovest evil more than good; *and* lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

1. "*Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?*" Doeg had small matter for boasting in having procured the slaughter of a band of defenceless priests. A mighty man indeed to kill men who never touched a sword! He ought to have been ashamed of his cowardice. He had no room for exultation! Honourable titles are but irony where the wearer is mean and cruel. If David alluded to Saul, he meant by these words pityingly to say, "How can one by nature fitted for nobler deeds, descend to so slow a level as to find a theme for boasting in a slaughter so heartless and mischievous?" "*The goodness of God endureth continually.*" A beautiful contrast. The tyrant's fury cannot dry up the perennial stream of divine mercy. If priests be slain their Master lives. If Doeg for awhile triumphs the Lord will outlive him, and right the wrongs which he has done. This ought to modify the proud exultations of the wicked, for after all, while the Lord liveth, iniquity has little cause to exalt itself.

2. "*Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs.*" Thou speakest with an ulterior design. The information given was for Saul's assistance apparently, but in very deed in his heart the Edomite hated the priests of the God of Jacob. It is a mark of deep depravity, when the evil spoken is craftily intended to promote a yet greater evil. "*Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*" David represents the false tongue as being effectual for mischief, like a razor which, unawares to the person operated on, is making him bald; so softly and deftly do Oriental barbers perform their work. Or he may mean that as with a razor a man's throat may be cut very speedily, under the pretence of shaving him, even thus keenly, basely, but effectually Doeg destroyed the band of the priests. Whetted by malice, and guided by craft, he did his cruel work with accursed thoroughness.

3. "*Thou lovest evil more than good.*" He loved not good at all. If both had been equally profitable and pleasant, he would have preferred evil. "*And lying rather than to speak righteousness.*" He was more at home at lying than at truth. He spake not the truth except by accident, but he delighted heartily in falsehood. "SELAH." Let us pause and look at the proud blustering liar.

Doeg is gone, but other dogs bark at the Lord's people. Saul's cattle-master is buried, but the devil still has his drovers, who fain would hurry the saints like sheep to the slaughter.

4 Thou lovest all devouring words, O *thou* deceitful tongue.

5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

4. "*Thou lovest.*" Thou hast a taste, a gusto for evil language. "*All devouring words.*" There are words that, like boa-constrictors, swallow men whole, or like lions, rend men to pieces; these words evil minds are fond of. Their oratory is evermore furious and bloody. That which will most readily provoke the lowest passions they are sure to employ, and they think such pandering to the madness of the wicked to be eloquence of a high order. "*O thou deceitful tongue.*" Men can manage to say a great many furious things, and yet cover all over with the pretext of justice. They claim that they are jealous for the right, but the truth is they are determined to put down truth and holiness, and craftily go about it under this transparent pretence.

5. "*God shall likewise destroy thee for ever.*" Fain would the persecutor destroy the church, and therefore God shall destroy him, pull down his house, pluck up his roots, and make an end of him. "*He shall take thee away.*" God shall extinguish his coal and sweep him away like the ashes of the hearth; he would have quenched the truth, and God shall quench him. "*And pluck thee out of thy dwelling place,*" like a plant torn from the place where it grew, or a captive dragged from his home. Ahimelech and his brother priests were cut off from their abode, and so should those be who compassed and contrived their murder. "*And root thee out of the land of the living.*" The persecutor shall be eradicated, stubbed up by the root, cut up root and branch. He sought the death of others and death shall fall upon him. He troubled the land of the living, and he shall be banished to that land where the wicked cease from troubling. Those who will not "let live" have no right to "live." God will turn the tables on malicious men, and mete to them a portion with their own measure. "Selah." Pause again, and behold the divine justice proving itself more than a match for human sin.

6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:

7 Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* strengthened himself in his wickedness.

8 But I *am* like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it*: and I will wait on thy name; for *it is* good before thy saints.

6. "*The righteous*"—the object of the tyrant's hatred—shall outlive his enmity, and "*also shall see,*" before his own face, the end of the ungodly oppressor. God permits Mordecai to see Haman hanging on the gallows. David had brought to him the tokens of Saul's death on Gilboa. "*And fear.*" Holy awe shall sober the mind of the good man; he shall reverently adore the God of providence. "*And shall laugh at him.*" If not with righteous joy, yet with solemn contempt. Schemes so far-reaching all baffled, plans so deep, so politic, all thwarted. Mephistopheles outwitted, the old serpent taken in his own subtlety. This is a goodly theme for that deep-seated laughter which is more akin to solemnity than merriment.

7. "*Lo.*" Look ye here, and read the epitaph of a mighty man, who lorded it proudly during his little hour, and set his heel upon the necks of the Lord's chosen. "*This is the man that made not God his strength.*" Behold the man!

The great vainglorious man. He found a fortress, but not in God; he gloried in his might, but not in the Almighty. Where is he now? How has it fared with him in the hour of his need? Behold his ruin, and be instructed. "*But trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.*" The substance he had gathered, and the mischiefs he had wrought, were his boast and glory. Wealth and wickedness are dreadful companions; when combined they make a monster. When the devil is master of money bags, he is a devil indeed. Beelzebub and Mammon together heat the furnace seven times hotter for the child of God, but in the end they shall work out their own destruction. Wherever we see to-day a man great in sin and substance, we shall do well to anticipate his end, and view this verse as the divine *in memoriam*.

8. "*But I*," hunted and persecuted though I am, "*am like a green olive tree.*" I am not plucked up or destroyed, but am like a flourishing olive, which out of the rock draws oil, and amid the drought still lives and grows. "*In the house of God.*" He was one of the divine family, and could not be expelled from it; his place was near his God, and there was he safe and happy, despite all the machinations of his foes. He was bearing fruit, and would continue to do so when all his proud enemies were withered like branches lopped from the tree. "*I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*" Eternal mercy is my present confidence. David knew God's mercy to be eternal and perpetual, and in that he trusted. What a rock to build on! What a fortress to fly to!

9. "*I will praise thee for ever.*" Like thy mercy shall my thankfulness be. While others boast in their riches I will boast in my God; and when their glorying is silenced for ever in the tomb, my song shall continue to proclaim the loving-kindness of Jehovah. "*Because thou hast done it.*" Thou hast vindicated the righteous, and punished the wicked. God's memorable acts of providence, both to saints and sinners, deserve and must have our gratitude. David views his prayer as already answered, the promises of God as already fulfilled, and therefore at once lifts up the sacred Psalm. "*And I will wait on thy name.*" God shall still be the psalmist's hope; he will not in future look elsewhere. He whose name has been so gloriously made known in truth and righteousness, is justly chosen as our expectation for years to come. "*For it is good before thy saints.*" Before or among the saints David intended to wait, feeling it to be good both for him and them to look to the Lord alone, and wait for the manifestation of his character in due season. Men must not too much fluster us; our strength is to sit still. Let the mighty ones boast, we will wait on the Lord; and if their haste brings them present honour, our patience will have its turn by-and-by, and bring us the honour which excelleth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—That *Maschil* means a sacred composition, is evident from the seventh verse of the 47th Psalm, where the passage which we render, "Sing ye praises with understanding," is literally, "Sing ye a *Maschil*," or song of instruction. This word occurs as a title in thirteen places; and six times is prefixed to compositions of David's. In several instances it occurs in consecutive Psalms; *i.e.*, in the 42nd (of which the 43rd is the sequel), the 44th and 45th, the 52nd, 53rd, 54th, and 55th, the 88th and 89th. A circumstance which favours the notion that the term was one peculiarly used by some particular editor or collector of a certain portion of the Psalter.—*John Jebb.*

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—*Why doth he glory in malice that is mighty?* that is, he that in malice is mighty, why doth he glory? There is need that a man be mighty, but in goodness, not in malice. Is it any great thing to glory in malice?

To build a house doth belong to few men, any ignorant man you please can pull down. To sow wheat, to dress the crop, to wait until it ripen, and in that fruit on which one has laboured to rejoice, doth belong to few men: with one spark any man you please can burn all the crop. . . . . What art thou about to do, O mighty man, what are thou about to do, boasting thyself much? Thou art about to kill a man: this thing also a scorpion, this also a fever, this also a poisonous fungus can do. To this is thy mightiness reduced, that it be made equal to a poisonous fungus!—*Augustine.*

Verse 1.—By "*mischief*" is understood not simply what evil he had done, but the prosperity which he now enjoyed, obtained through mischief; as is clear both from the word *boasting* and from the seventh verse. . . . . Formerly he was the chief of Saul's shepherds (1 Sam. xxi. 8), but by that wicked destruction of the priests of God by Saul, and the execution of the cruel sentence, he obtained the chief place near to the king (*ibid.* xxii. 9).—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 1.—"*O mighty man.*" These words may be added either by way of irony, as if he had said, A great deal of valour and prowess you have shown in slaying a company of unarmed men, the priests of the Lord, yea, women and children, no way able to resist you; or else to imply the ground of his vain boasting, to wit, either his present greatness, as being a man in great place, and of great power with Saul; or the great preferments he expected from Saul.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 1.—"*The goodness of God endureth continually.*" He contrasts the *goodness* of God with the wealth and might of Doeg, and the foundation of his own confidence as widely different from that of Doeg, his own placed upon the goodness of God, enduring for ever and showing itself effectual. It is as if he had said, The *goodness* of God to which I trust, is most powerful and the same throughout all time, and in it I shall at all times most surely rejoice that *goodness* of God, since now it sustains me, so it will exalt me in its own good time; it therefore *is*, and *will be above me.* . . . . . Not without emphasis does he say the goodness of *the strong God*, a contrast to Doeg the *hero*, and the ruinous foundation of his fortune.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—"*Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*" Thus our version. But I do not very well understand the propriety of *the tongue's devising mischief*, and devising it *like a sharp razor.* But we may easily avoid this harsh comparison by rendering the words: *Thou contrivest mischiefs with thy tongue, as with a sharp razor, O thou dealer in deceit: i.e.*, Thou contrivest with thy smooth and flattering tongue to wound the reputation and character of others, as though thou wast cutting their throats with a smooth razor.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 2.—"*Like a sharp razor,*" that instead of shaving the hair lanceth the flesh; or missing the beard cutteth the throat.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 2.—The smooth, adroit manner of executing a wicked device neither hides nor abates its wickedness. Murder with "*a sharp razor*" is as wicked as murder with a meat-axe or bludgeon. A lie very ingeniously framed and rehearsed in an oily manner, is as great a sin, and in the end will be seen to be as great a folly as the most bungling attempt at deception.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou lovest evil more than good.*"—"*Thou hast loved evil,*" he says, "*more than good,*" not by simply preferring it, but by substituting it; so that in the stead of good he hath done evil, and that from the inmost love of his soul, bent upon evil; wherefore he does not say that he *admitted*, but *loved* evil, not *moral* only, but *physical*, for the destruction of his neighbours; so *to have loved* it, that he willed nothing but *evil*, being averse to all good.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 4.—"*Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.*"—He was all *tongue;* a *man of words;* and these the most deceitful and injurious.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 5.—"*God shall destroy thee forever*," etc.—There are four words the psalmist makes use of to denote the utter vengeance that awaited this deceitful and bloody wretch, all of them having a very strong meaning. The first, יִתֶּצְךָ from נָתַץ, signifies *to pull down*, and break utterly into pieces; as when an altar is demolished. (Judges vi. 30; viii. 9.) The second, יַחְתְּךָ from the root חָתָה, which signifies *to twist* anything, or *pluck it up by twisting it round*, as trees are sometimes twisted up. The third, יִסָּחֲךָ from נָסַח, which properly signifies *utterly to sweep away anything like dust or chaff;* and the expression יִסָּחֲךָ מֵאֹהֶל means not *sweep thee away from thy tent*, but, *sweep thee away, that thou mayest be no longer a tent;* thyself, thy family, thy fortune, shall be wholly and entirely swept away, and dissipated forever; to which the fourth word, שָׁרְשֶׁךָ, answers, *eradicabit te*, he shall root thee out *from the land of the living*. 'Tis impossible words can express a more entire and absolute destruction.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 5.—"*God shall likewise destroy thee forever.*" Here are *quot verba tot tonotrua*, so many words, so many thunderclaps. As thou hast destroyed the Lord's priests, and their whole city, razing and harassing it; so God will demolish and destroy thee utterly, as an house pulled down to the ground, so that one stone is not left upon another (Lev. xiv. 45); so shall God pull down Doeg from that high preferment, which he by sycophancy hath got at court.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 5.—Wonderful is the force of the verbs in the original, which convey to us the four ideas of *laying prostrate, dissolving as by fire, sweeping away as with a besom, and totally extirpating root and branch*, as a tree is eradicated from the spot on which it grew. If a farther comment be wanted, it may be found in the history of David's enemies, and the crucifiers of the son of David; but the passage will be fully and finally explained by the destruction of the world of the ungodly at the last day.—*George Horne.*

Verse 5.—The poet accumulates dire and heavy words, and mingles various metaphors that he might paint the picture of this man's destruction in more lively colours. Three metaphors appear to be joined together, the first taken from a *building*, the second from a *tent*, the third from a *tree*, if attention is given to the force and common acceptation of the words.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5.—"*He shall take thee away;*" or, *seize thee*, as coals are taken with the tongs.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 6.—"*The righteous also shall see*," etc. That is, to use the apt words of Gejerus, "*This shall not be a secret judgment, or known only to a few, but common fame shall spread abroad throughout the kingdom, or city, the notable punishments of the ungodly. The righteous also shall not pass by such an event with indifference, but with earnest eyes shall contemplate it*," etc. I add, and hence shall they take joy, and turn it to their own use, to the greater fearing of God. . . . . *The righteous*, upon whose destruction the ungodly man was intent, shall survive and spend their lives safe in the favour of God; *they shall see* with attentive mind, they shall consider; nor, as worldlings are accustomed, shall they pass it by without reflection or improvement, they shall see and *fear*, namely, God the just judge; and instructed in his judgment by this instance, they shall be the more careful to abstain from all designs and crimes of this kind.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 6.—"*And shall laugh at him;*" or, *over him*—over the wicked man thus cast down—*they shall laugh.* Such exultation, to our modern sensibilities, seems shocking, because we can hardly conceive of it, apart from the gratification of personal vindictiveness. But there is such a thing as a righteous hatred, as a righteous scorn. There is such a thing as a shout of righteous joy at the downfall of the tyrant and the oppressor, at the triumph of righteousness and truth over wrong and falsehood.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 7.—"*Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength.*" David having showed (in verses 5, 6) the wicked man, by the righteous judgment of God

rooted out of the land of the living, shows us in the next verse, the righteous man at once fearing and laughing at this sight, as also pointing at him saying, "*Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength.*" The words are a divine but cutting sarcasm. The original is *geber*, which signifieth a strong, valiant man: as we say in English, Lo, this is the brave and gallant man you wot of! But who was this for a man? He was one, saith he, that "*trusted in the abundance of his riches.*" Oh! 'tis hard to abound in riches and not to trust in them. Hence that caution (Psalm lxii. 10): "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Now, what is the setting the heart upon riches but our rejoicing and trusting in them? And because the heart of man is so easily persuaded into this sinful trust upon riches, therefore the apostle is urgent with Timothy to persuade all rich men—not only mere worldly rich men, but godly rich men—against it; yea, he urgeth Timothy to persuade rich men against two sins, which are worse than all the poverty in the world, yet the usual attendants of riches—pride and confidence: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded." 1 Tim. vi. 17.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 7, 8.—Perhaps some of you have been long professors, and yet come to little growth in love to God, humility, heavenly-mindedness, mortification; and it is worth the digging to see what lies at the root of your profession, whether there be not a legal principle that hath too much influenced you. Have you not thought to carry all with God from your duties and services, and too much laid up your hopes in your own actings? Alas! this is as so much dead earth, which must be thrown out, and gospel principles laid in the room thereof. Try but this course, and try whether the spring of thy grace will not come on apace. David gives an account how he came to stand and flourish when some that were rich and mighty, on a sudden withered and came to nothing. "*Lo,*" saith he, "*this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches.*" "*But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*" While others trust in the riches of their own righteousness and services, and make not Christ their strength, do thou renounce all, and trust in the mercy of God in Christ, and thou shalt be like a green olive when they fade and wither.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 8 (*first clause*):—

"But I am olive charged with fruit
In fertile soil that grows."

This appears to express the meaning of the Hebrew words, which our translators render, "*like a green olive tree,*" but which in reality have no reference to the colour, but to the flourishing, vigorous, and thriving state of the plant; just as Homer gives it the epithet of "luxuriant," and "flourishing;" and Ovid that of "ever-flourishing." The fact is, the colour of the leaves of this tree is not a bright lively green; but a dark, disagreeable, or yellowish one. Scheuchzer describes the leaves, as "*superne coloris atrovirentis, vel in viridi flavescentis.*" An English traveller, writing from Italy, thus expresses his disappointment about the olive tree:—"The fields, and indeed the whole face of Tuscany, are in a manner covered with olive trees; but the olive tree does not answer the character I have conceived of it. The royal psalmist and some of the sacred writers, speak with rapture of the 'green olive tree,' so that I expected a beautiful green; and I confess to you, I was wretchedly disappointed to find its hue resembling that of our hedges when they are covered with dust." I have heard other travellers express the same feeling of disappointment. "The true way of solving the difficulty," as Harmer properly remarks, "is to consider the word translated 'green,' not as descriptive of colour, but of some other property; youthfulness, vigour, prosperity, or the like.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 8.—"*Green olive tree in the house of God.*"—Several expositors fancifully imagine that olive trees grow in certain of the courts of the Tabernacle; but the notion must not be endured, it would have been too near an approach to the groves of the heathen to have been tolerated, at least in David's time. The text

should surely be read with some discretion; the poet does not refer to olive trees in God's house, but compares *himself in the house of God* to an olive tree. This reminds us of the passage, "Thy children like olive plants around thy table," where some whose imaginations have been more lively than their judgments, have seen a table surrounded, not with children, but with olive plants. Whoever, in the realms of common sense, ever heard of olive plants round a table? If, as Thrupp supposes, Nob was situated upon the Mount of Olives, we can, without any conjecture, see a reason for the present reference to a flourishing olive tree.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 9.—He compares himself (1) With an *olive tree*, a tree always green, lasting long and fruitful, whose fruit is most useful and grateful: so he paints his future state as joyful, glorious, lasting, and useful and pleasing to men: plainly a reference is made to the *royal* and *prophetic* office, in both of which he represents himself as an *olive tree*, by supplying others with *oil* through his rule and instruction: (2) With *the olive* growing luxuriantly, and abounding in spreading bough, and so, spacious and large. . . . . (3) But why does he add *in the house of God?* That he might indicate, unless I am deceived: (*a*) That he should possess a dwelling in that place where the *house of God* was, whence he was now exiled through the calumnies of Doeg and the attacks of Saul stirred up thereby: (*b*) That he should perform distinguished service to the house of God, by adorning it, and by restoring religion, now neglected, and practising it with zeal: (*c*) That he should derive from God and his favour, whose that house was, all his prosperity: (*d*) That he, like a son of God, should rejoice in familiarity with him, and should become heir to his possessions and promises.—*Hermann Venema.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The confidence of faith. I. *The circumstances were distressing.* 1. David was misjudged. 2. David exiled. 3. A bad man in power. 4. God's priests slain. II. *The consolation was abiding.* 1. There is a God. 2. He is good. 3. His goodness continues. 4. Good will, therefore, overcome. III. *The rejoinder was triumphant.* "Why boastest thou?" 1. The mischief did not touch the main point. 2. It would be overruled. 3. It would recoil. 4. It would expose the perpetrators to scorn.

Verse 3.—In what cases men clearly love evil more than good.

Verses 7, 8.—The worldling like an uprooted tree, the believer a vigorous, well-planted olive.

Verse 8.—The believer's character, position, confidence, and continuance.

Verse 9.—The double duty, and the double reason: the single heart and its single object.

Verse 9.—What God has done, what we will do, and why.

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-SECOND PSALM.

CHANDLER'S "*Life of David*," contains an Exposition of this Psalm. Vol. I., pp. 140—143.